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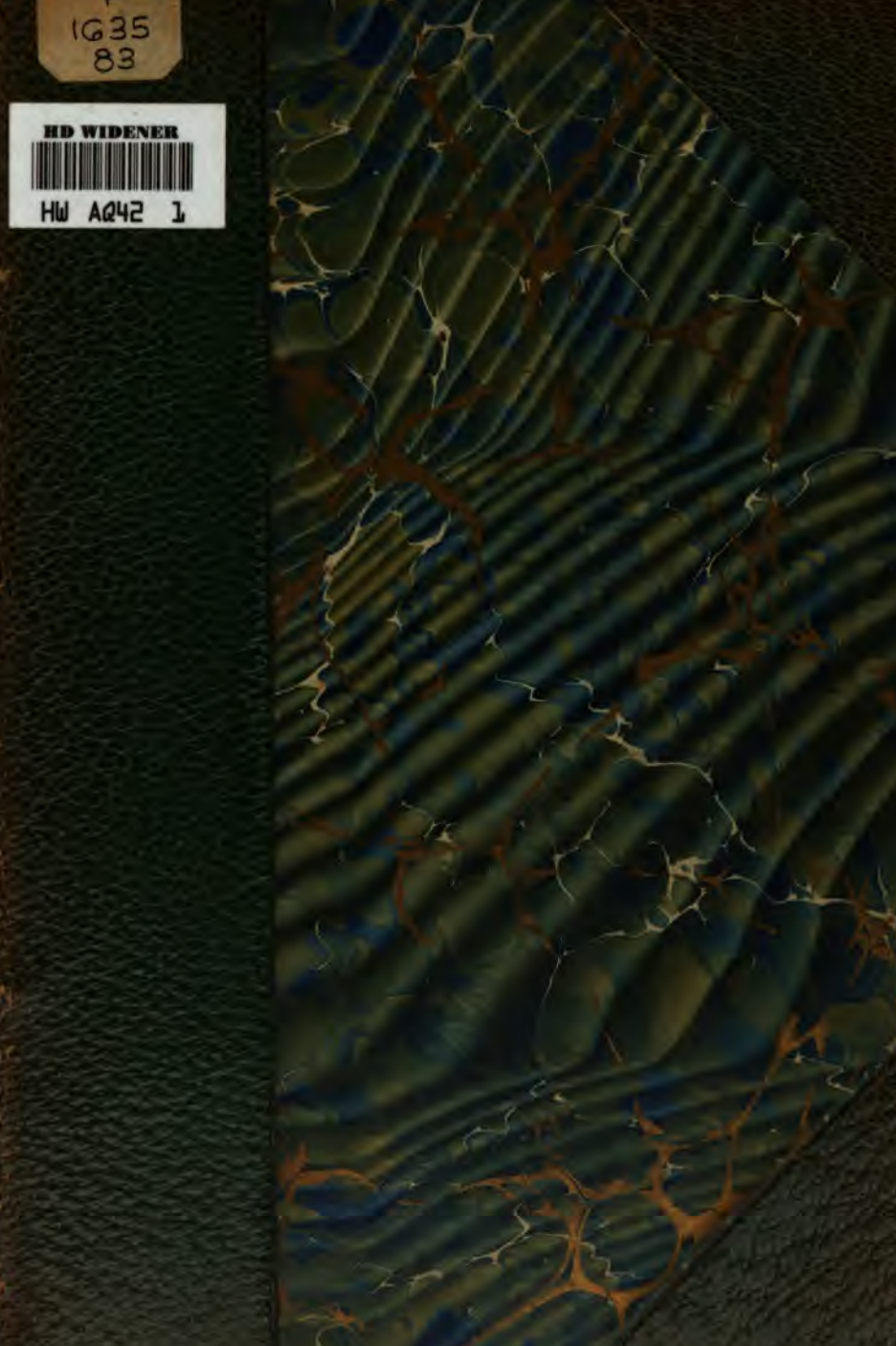

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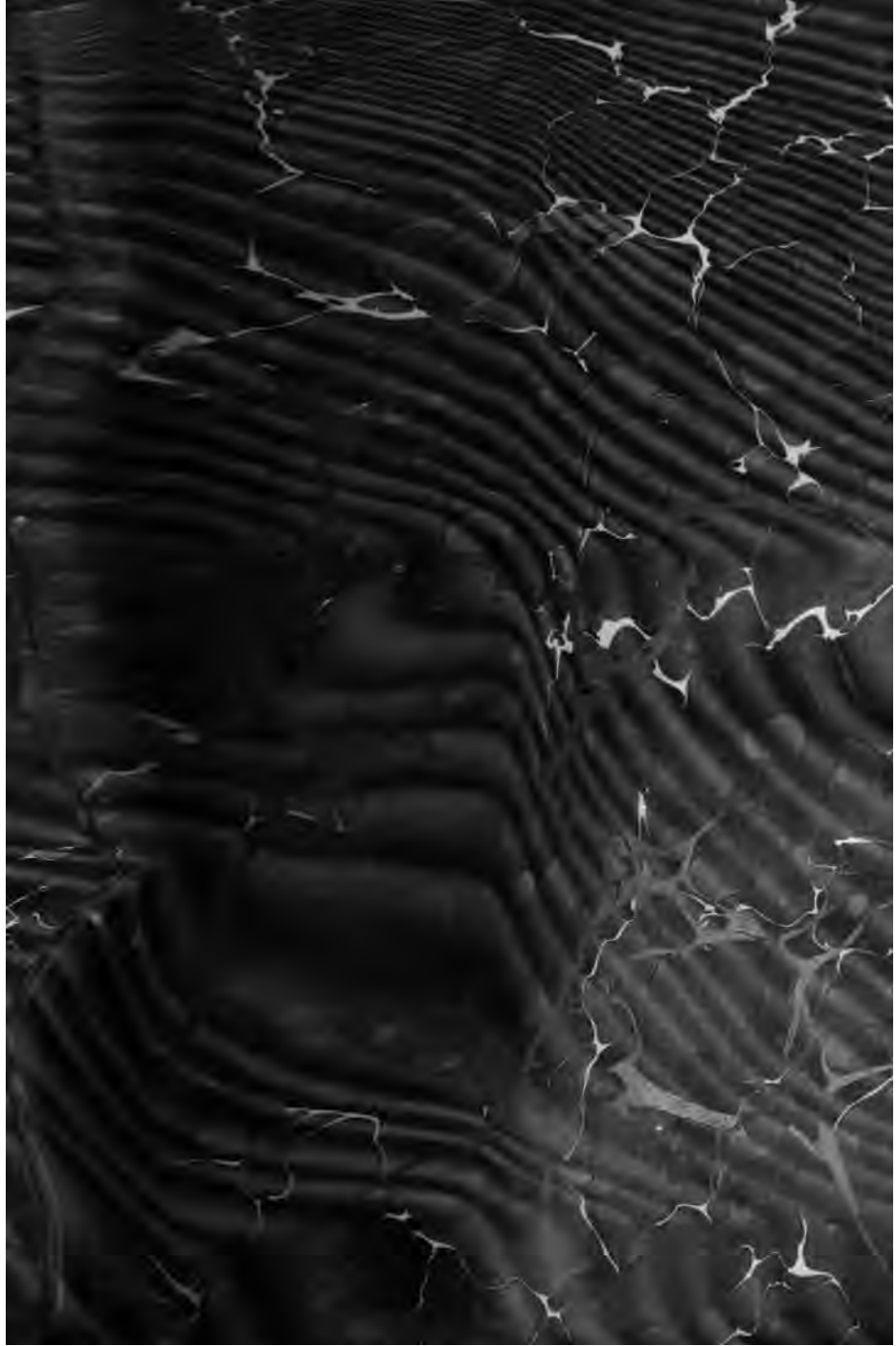

BOUND BY BLACKWELL

TRAVEL AND TROUT

IN THE ANTIPODES.

"RED SPINNER."

REV. CHARLES SERJEANT,
STRATFORD.

TRAVEL AND TROUT

IN THE ANTIPODES

AN ANGLER'S SKETCHES IN TASMANIA AND NEW ZEALAND

By WILLIAM SENIOR

("RED SPINNER")

AUTHOR OF "BY STREAM AND SEA," "WATERSIDE SKETCHES," "NOTABLE SHIPWRECKS," ETC.

"Oh! monstrous! But one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else keep close: we'll read it at more advantage."—SHAKESPEARE

London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1880

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PREFACE.

With the exception of two chapters, portions of which have appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, these sketches will, I believe, be new to English readers, though they are to some extent enlarged and rearranged from Notes from Tasmania published in *The Week*, and from Notes from New Zealand published in the *Queenslander*—both weekly journals issuing in Brisbane.

Hereby, therefore, I tender to the several proprietors hearty thanks for permission, cheerfully given, to unearth produce which they might otherwise have padlocked in their own garners.

Taking it for granted that Tasmania and New Zealand are in the main well known to the ordinary reader, I have not pretended to write of other than the particular localities I visited; and I am well aware that these did not comprise many—from a scene-painter's standpoint—famous places in those islands.

W. S.

Brisbane, *May Day*, 1879.

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PART I.

TRAVEL AND TROUT: TASMANIA.

TRAVEL AND TROUT.

CHAPTER I.

DIALOGUE AND DETERMINATION.

A hot day in Brisbane—Visions—Queensland climate—Colonial conversation—The marsupial plague—Wreck and clearance—A thunderstorm—More travel than trout: a warning.

It *did* seem on the face of it a strange whim to undertake a journey of about three thousand miles for the sake of a few days' trout fishing. But it happened on this wise:—

It had been a hot day in Brisbane. Young A., lounging down Queen Street, on the shady side, languidly imparted to young B. his conviction that it had been "blazing hot, and no mistake;" old C., sitting in the Club verandah, possibly the coolest place in the whole city, admitted at length that it *was* warm, observing—

"By Jove, sir, it reminds me of the old days on the Hunter, where your very boots were burnt off your feet."

Mr. D., Member of the Legislative Assembly, and entitled therefore to write M.L.A. after his name

mopping his steaming forehead, swore that another year he would allow public business to go to the dogs, so far as he was concerned, if the Government, against all precedent, law, order, and common sense, prolonged the session into December. Mr. E., always great at quotations and memories, said he had often during the day been reminded of Sydney Smith's idea, that it would be a capital thing to take off your flesh and sit in your bones. The poor people in the low ground and narrow thoroughfares panted, prone upon the hard boards or harder ground; well-to-do folks in their suburban verandahs panted upon their Hongkong couches and lounging chairs. The heavens were as brass, and the earth as iron. Three men toiling on the wharves were smitten with sunstroke, and taken to the hospital. And the afternoon arrived without that welcome breeze which generally in the summer months comes with healing and refreshment from the sea. It was indeed hot—even for Brisbane, and the meteorological observer duly noted that the glass had stood at 101° in the shade.

What can be done on such a day? What need be done except necessity drives or duty calls? I answer the question by lazily swinging in a hammock, and seeking visions in the ascending wreaths curling from the nut-brown pipe-bowl. Soon the visions came: farmyards kneedeep in snow; country lanes, venerable churches, lea and fallow, copse and garden, in their full winter garb; river and pond ice-bound, and ringing with boys sliding and skaters circling and wheeling. What more natural than that, hammock still swinging, insects still buzzing and humming, and perspiration oozing from every pore, one lingers fondly over the dream of winter, and passes, without an effort, through

other dreams of spring, summer, and autumn scenes? By-and-by it becomes a dream of brook and stream, of fly-rod and wading gear, of cool ripples and speckled trout.

Now, Queensland is a rich young colony, with more sterling attractions than I have now time or inclination to enumerate. One thing, however, it lacks: it has no trout, nor, I fear, a climate that will ever permit of the acclimatisation of that prince of fish. Whether any country can ever be truly great without salmon or trout is a question requiring more consideration than I can at present afford. It is enough for me to know that where there are none there must always be to me an aching void. For a long while after leaving the old country I suffered severely from home-sickness, but its most acute phase was what perhaps I may be allowed to term trout-sickness. Sometimes I had to hide my fly-rod, and shun the English sporting papers. Upon this hot day in Brisbane the symptoms come on, and they are such pleasurable pain, that I take no steps for remedy.

Trout? It suddenly occurs to me that there are trout in Tasmania, and Tasmania is within eight days' travel of my Queensland home.

When the sun sets in an orange glare, and the mosquitoes swarm up in hungry evening cry from the mangroves at the river-edge, taking a mean advantage of bared arms and naked feet, the hammock becomes untenable. I restlessly overhaul my fly-books, winch, net, and rod, long disused, but bearing honourable marks of active service in other latitudes. And so, prompted by the vague sort of feeling which induced Micawber to take a look at the Medway, and one of Veneering's friends to drive down to the House of

Commons, I saunter up the road to commune with a certain acquaintance.

A long while ago, in the old country, the doctor told him his life was not worth another year's purchase, if he remained to permit the fogs and east winds to perfect the work they had begun; and, as the poor consumptive sailed out of the Thames, his friends returning from Gravesend agreed that his days were numbered. Yet the climate of Queensland, with him as with others, had arrested the insidious disease, and made him a strong, hopeful man. I knew I could at least talk ice and snow and trout with him. At first, when he suffered, as every emigrant, rich or poor, will suffer, if the heart remain green, from home-sickness, it was curious how greatly he began to respect his former enemy, the bitter English winter. From the moment he was assured that in his adopted home he would never behold snow, and seldom ice, the mighty black frosts and blinding snow-storms driven before grey north-easter became cherished recollections; all forgetful that they and their more prosaic kindred, fog, sleet, and east wind, had forced him to flee from the land of his fathers.

The frogs and crickets keep up a deafening chorus as we talk of these things. A thunderstorm is meanwhile coming up against the wind. A squatter friend drops in, and the conversation at once becomes colonial. It is started by a casual statement as to the parched condition of the country, and turns with full force upon the ravages committed by marsupials; upon the Polynesian labour question; upon the splendid new country discovered out west; upon the projected railways, and the chances of their ever being built; upon the members of the Legislature, and their pecu-

liarities; and upon many another topic, from which the listener learns something of colonial manners and customs, trials and triumphs.

"You talk of the plague of marsupials," says the up-country man, "almost as a kind of joke, in Brisbane. I shouldn't wonder if they raise a laugh upon the question in the Christmas pantomime. But it is a most alarming evil, I can tell you. I was on a station the other day where the kangaroos were eating up everything."

"Oh yes," breaks in the other, "you squatters are like the English farmers; there is always something wrong. Why, a man seriously told me the other day that, in his part of the country, you might notice a big kangaroo waiting day by day—camping out, so to speak—at a particular root until a blade of grass should shoot up."

"Well, well, have your joke," the other replies, good-humouredly. "You yourself must have seen enough to convince you of the magnitude of the devastation. The squatter I referred to has already spent thirteen thousand pounds on fencing, and has not finished yet."

"Serves you right," is the rejoinder. "You took it into your heads that because a few lambs were killed, and sheep worried, the dingo must be improved off the face of the country. You swished your law through your Houses of Parliament, slaughtered your dingoes, and now you would give your ears to have them back again to keep down the marsupials. Can't you invent or introduce some wild animal that will replace the martyred wild dog? Here's a chance for your Acclimatization Society"—turning to my friend, who is a member of that useful body.

"Our business is with plants at present," he says, "not birds or beasts. But to return to the marsupials. I have been assured that the kangaroos come first and eat off the grass; that the wallabies, following, grub up the roots; and that a weed succeeds which no animal will eat."

"Yes," is the answer, "but it is enough for some of us to know that the creatures are ruining the country."

"This country will take a deal of ruining," I venture, from conviction, to urge.

"And you still think of Tasmania?" inquires my friend of me, bringing the conversation back to where it hung before the squatter arrived.

"Either Tasmania or New Zealand," I answer; "the time has arrived when I must slay a trout somewhere, and I believe Tasmania to be the best place for me. I prefer Tasmania, but I will bow to the will of the majority."

"Hark at him," says my friend. "You would fancy he means to go into the Assembly at the first opportunity, and is already catching the spirit of the place."

"Meanwhile, however, he wishes to catch a trout; so we will talk the matter over with our colleagues, and give his interests our best consideration. I believe that is the ordinary way of putting it," adds the other.

We thereupon resolve ourselves into a committee of the whole house, and decide upon Tasmania.

"Look out for a storm directly," at length says the squatting gentleman. "I saw one on the station last February I shall never forget. It was awfully sublime. I had been dozing on the verandah, fairly oppressed like every living thing by the sultriness of the afternoon. In the uneasiness we sometimes experience between sleep and wakefulness I heard an awesome

sound. At first I thought it was the roar of the sea bursting on a distant shore; but it was not that. Rather, it resembled the approach of a multitude with ponderous gongs beating. A blue-black line of cloud, extended straight across the country, approached frowning, and revolving on a mighty axis never forged on earth; fire flashed from the terrible mass; and before I had thoroughly recovered my calmness the tornado was upon us, with shrieks, and clamour, and force that made one think of the day of doom. Great trees were twisted round as you twist reeds, and the course of the storm to this day is marked by a long broad track of wreck and clearance."

Hurrying homeward, and too feverish to get inside the mosquito curtains, I again go through my fly-books, test the casts, unreel the lines. The storm gives me an accompaniment. I pause, to watch the tempest from a lee corner of the verandah. The artillery of heaven opens over Brisbane, and in full force beyond Kangaroo Point. The prevailing gloom is an appropriate foil for the pale red lightning, which first in general flashes, and then in fierce forks, rends the clouds asunder. Now superb chains of liquid flame run from east to west; again, a brood of fiery serpents would seem to be chasing each other across the leaden sky; then the lightning describes the course of a river, throwing out tributaries on either side; and finally, as the heart of the tempest passes inland, perchance to nourish the thirsty earth, the flashes assume a playful form, breaking without intercession, but with none of the anger that marked the beginning of the storm.

The night is not perceptibly cooled by the too transient downfall, and in lieu of sleep I set my affairs in order, and next day take my passage south.

Returning from the shipping office I meet my friend. He smiles, and asks—

"Do you remember Prince Henry's ejaculation about the intolerable proportion between bread and sack?"

"I do. What of it?"

"Only this. If you go to Tasmania you'll find an intolerable amount of travel to an infinitesimal amount of trout."

And in closing Chapter I., it is only fair I should warn the reader that my friend spoke undoubted truth.

CHAPTER II.

COASTING AND CAPITALS.

Brisbane unfinished—Rival ports—The river—Situation of the city—Parliament buildings—Threatening weather—A nasty night at sea—Midsummer Christmas—Sydney harbour—Sydney city—*En route*—Turning the corner—Melbourne and its suburbs—King People rules—"Chalk it up."

BEFORE finishing this book I shall have occasion to deal with more than one Australasian capital, and since my start is from Brisbane, let me at once introduce the reader to that city, the introduction being the first contribution to that inevitable preponderance of travel over trout of which somewhat has already been hinted.

Standing, as we will suppose ourselves to be doing, on the wharf, pending the departure of the steamer south, our view of Brisbane is limited, and would favour the idea that the place is unfinished. Though it is not so unfinished as it appears from this standpoint, there is some room for the supposition. Brisbane is the youngest of the Australian capitals, not having yet attained its majority, and there are reasons why it must take longer to mature than did either Sydney or Melbourne. The first was formed under the direct fostering of the English Government, and began with

whatever advantages belong to a garrison town. The second sprang out of a gold fever, and, even in its canvas and weatherboard era, had collected as many inhabitants as Brisbane possessed when it was fifteen years old. Brisbane, too, has four port rivals along the Queensland coast, namely, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Bowen, Townsville, and other ports are forming still further north.

The original promoters of separation from New South Wales intended to make the Clarence river the southern line of demarcation, and had that scheme been carried out Brisbane would have stood upon a central point of the coast. It was decided otherwise, and the metropolis of the new colony was somehow fixed at the lower extremity of a coast line of from two to three thousand miles, rendering the establishment of several ports, as the country became occupied, an unquestioned necessity.

In its present condition of development Brisbane is a fair example of what Sydney and Melbourne were in their transition between the chrysalis and butterfly state. Side by side with the three-storied, ornate, stone-carved, beporticoed insurance office or bank may be seen the shed of galvanized iron or humble wooden store. In any but the main street the footpaths are, to say the least, diversified in character; the suburbs are as yet innocent of gas, and everywhere the architecture is composite, and often primitive. Yet the city, like the colony of which it is the capital, is making enormous strides every year; and as the development goes on, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked straight. When it is remembered that Brisbane has had no gold rush to give it sudden impetus, like Melbourne, and that its geographical position forbids

its being the one unrivalled outlet for the colony, like Sydney; when it is remembered that middle-aged inhabitants have shot snipe and seen bullock-drays bogged where the heart of the city now lies, it goes without saying that Brisbane is a remarkably lusty youth, with a magnificent manhood before it.

The city, which is about eighteen miles from the fine river from which it derives its name, spreads from the wharfages over the high ground and upon the hills which catch the sea-breezes at the earliest moment and afford at all times a maximum of coolness. The Brisbane is a broad stream, with a narrow and tortuous channel, which the colony, at great expense, is widening and deepening. Already all but the largest ocean steamers can get to the wharves, and the process of improving the navigation goes on steadily. The Brisbane river is serpentine in its course, and its apparently land-locked expanses improve in appearance as the ascent is made; the land becomes higher, low mountain ranges appear in the distance, and the uncleared and half-cleared bush gives place to clean cultivation, patches of maize, groves of bananas, and ornamental gardens.

The situation of Brisbane is its chief charm and prospective advantage. If it had been laid out on some definite plan like Melbourne and Adelaide, and had not been allowed to grow promiscuously, it would have been a place of some beauty, as no doubt it will be in a few years. It is strange that cities so near the tropics as Sydney and Brisbane should not have introduced shade trees into their thoroughfares. It is strange, of course, that there should be any city or town in Australia without its boulevards, if only for ornamental purposes, seeing that land is abundant and the climate

particularly favourable for the growth of suitable and even uncommon shade-yielding trees. But that the semi-tropical and tropical towns should be without their leafy street avenues, from reasons of utility as well as ornament, is strangest of all. Yet so it is.

From the higher point of Brisbane there are fine views of country bounded by picturesque mountains. From a friend's verandah upon such a point, I have often looked with speechless admiration over a panorama of city, river, forest, and mountain, changing under the lovely sunset tints of blue and violet that one looks for when the weather is westerly and fine, until it faded into the purple half-light that is seen to such perfection in Australia. From other hills glimpses of lake-like reaches of the river appear; and, elsewhere, charming bird's-eye views of the city are attainable. The river, therefore, enters largely into a consideration of Brisbane, which, as a fact, it divides. Pleasant bush drives may be had in any direction, and within a few miles of the General Post Office there are sugar-mills and arrowroot factories in operation.

One of the finest prospects of its kind I have ever seen was from an eminence on the spur of a range within four miles of Brisbane. It was a bright summer afternoon, and grateful was it to leave the high-road and ride up the steep bridle-path in the bush. Complete silence reigned in the wooded solitude of the ridge, from which, through openings in the gum trees, the lower world occasionally presented itself, quivering under a sweltering heat. The goal was a clearing on the scarp of an abrupt shoulder, to be reached only on foot or horseback, and from it the town of Ipswich, twenty miles distant, could be descried, a white shining mass. All the intervening country lay plain to view.

In another direction the blue sea glittered, Moreton Island lying upon it like a cloud. For once the gum trees, looked upon from above, and seen, therefore, with imperfections hidden, added to the beauty of the scene. For leagues and leagues the full-bosomed hills were covered with woods. The broad river, which gladdens the city and invites it on to greatness, wound round a hundred tongues of land; lost to sight for a while, it would reappear, a cord of silver entangled amongst the trees. Cultivated belts along its margin were level and smiling in their bright green. Far away, still progressing to the ocean, you might follow the windings of the river, and in the clear atmosphere they resembled a succession of white terraces set at unequal distances the one above the other. It was a noble picture, and I have seen many like it in Queensland.

The ease with which building allotments can be obtained in the outskirts of Brisbane has had the effect of imparting to it a very straggling aspect. A working man can buy a small square of ground for twenty pounds and less. It is too small for sanitary fair play, but it will be his own. So he becomes a landowner, and puts up a slab shanty, or a tent, at first, and lives there until he can replace it with a wooden cottage. The styles of this cottage architecture are amusing sometimes, and as widely different as the poles. The warm climate enables people to live out of doors the major part of the year, and the buildings are therefore of the flimsiest. You may see a suburban residence constructed of beaten-out kerosine tins; another modelled after a sentry-box. Upon hills great and small, on the slopes of gullies, or in the bush, resembling a temporary encampment rather than a permanent suburb, these humble freeholds attract the attention of the passer-by,

but, as the reader will perceive, do not improve the general appearance of the place. Brisbane, in consequence of this peculiarity, extends over an unusually wide area, and seldom obtains the appreciation it deserves.

Above its sister capitals, Brisbane probably best meets the stranger's idea of a colonial town. In its steady practical progress it has not yet had time to put on airs, or to be pretentious. The streets, buildings, and people in their respective ways inform you that hitherto they have been content to walk before they run. There is no public market-place, and no theatre worthy of the name; but there are several large public buildings now in course of erection. Hitherto, the Brisbanians have cheerfully put up with makeshifts. But the day of makeshifts has set, and public works and private enterprises are being vigorously undertaken. Still, Brisbane looks what it is—colonial, which cannot be said of either Melbourne or Sydney. The wooden houses, with their inevitable verandahs; the hitching-posts at the shop doors; the prevalence of broad-brimmed hats, moleskin breeks, and riding-boots in the streets; the passing country farmer, with wife and children perched atop of the produce, make you feel that you are undoubtedly in Australia.

In one thing Brisbane excels. It has the most sensible Parliament buildings of all the colonies—handsome without the overdone ornamentation of the Melbourne, and unpretentious without the poverty-stricken appearance of the Sydney Houses of Legislature. Its Acclimatization Grounds and Botanic Gardens—the first maintained with praiseworthy perseverance by a private society, and the second a Government reserve—have the advantage of being able to grow

tropical rarities that have no chance of life further south. On the whole, Brisbane always seems to agreeably surprise the stranger; and well it might. It is a homely city, none the worse because it is, in fashionable pretensions, behind Sydney, in the same ratio as Sydney is behind Melbourne. When the seasons are favourable no one has cause to say that Brisbane is not a pleasant place; and of its healthiness at all times there is no question.

But to our voyage. The departure and arrival of the boats are stock sources of interest and excitement, and to-day the outgoing steamer and the wharf are enlivened with the customary bustle and confusion when the bell rings. Ladies who have kissed each other fifty times before kiss each other as often again as the time allows; gentlemen rush up from the saloon, wiping their moustachios, the steam from the whistle having perhaps bedewed them; the crowd who have come down to the wharf to see the vessel depart being twice as numerous as the people departing, odd couples who wish to have a few last words of affection or business are prevented by all manner of acquaintances putting themselves forward; a chorus of "Be sure and write" is chanted ashore; "Cast off" comes as a final solo from on board. Punctual almost to a moment, the *Florence Irving* sheers out into the stream, and steams slowly by the gardens and hills of Kangaroo Point.

However the passenger may fare in blue water, the two hours' trip down the Brisbane river is generally enjoyed, and is sometimes the only portion of the voyage which *is* enjoyed. It is smooth water to Moreton Bay, and nearly always across the bay, which is studded with islands, and, unfortunately, with shoals and sandbanks that confine the channels.

At the mouth of the river I notice that the sky is scanned very suspiciously by many of the passengers; the weather certainly is extremely threatening. In Brisbane another thunder-storm was waiting to burst when we sailed; as the voyage down the river progresses, the region of winds is entered. The sea-seasoned among the passengers peep through the skylights to note whether the tables are being laid for dinner; doubtful individuals inquire of each other whether they are good sailors; that remarkable class who are said to be unpleasantly qualmish by merely looking at a marine picture persuade themselves they are very ill and perseveringly settle down to make themselves as miserable as possible.

Is there any necessity to enter into a detailed description of a nasty night at sea? I suspect many of my readers will without hesitation say there is not. One by one the ladies disappear, and many of the gentlemen droop shyly as they sit on deck. Sea-sickness must be a terrible business; it takes the starch out of the most straitlaced gentleman that ever cultivated the noble science of deportment, and, as one of those irreverent American writers remarked, proves that the ocean is the only thing in the world that makes a woman indifferent to her personal appearance. Before we are fairly at sea, numbers of passengers have cautiously steadied themselves along the side, staggered across to the companion, and lowered themselves dismally below, to be seen no more for a season. Night comes in darkness, storm, and uproar, to hide the pangs and stifle the sounds of human suffering. Ports are closed and things made generally taut.

Though we are seldom out of sight of land and the inland ranges, the trip from Brisbane to Sydney is not

interesting except for the miscellaneous company, who, in fine weather, are always on their good behaviour and anxious to please. Yet it is a characteristic sample of Australian coasting. At such times you may indulge in a good deal of character study. You have people just arrived from the old country; rough, genial gold-miners from the rich Queensland gold-fields; perhaps pearl fishermen from Torres Straits; squatters and their wives, pleasant in the prosperity which has never rubbed out their best human nature, and squatters and their wives whose purse-pride renders them the very reverse of pleasant; business men, Jackaroos—the name given to young gentlemen newly arrived from home to gather colonial experiences—bound to Sydney for a spell; globe-trotters wise in their own conceits; unprotected females who read novels and knit knitting; a few old women of the other sex to potter about and snarl because those strong-blooded fellows *will* smoke on the poop; and always, strange to say, a gentleman of the clerical persuasion. Here, it must be admitted, we have a variety of materials ready to hand; shake them up for three days together, and what figures the kaleidoscope will give you!

The second day is bright and breezy, the second night clear and quiet, and on the morning of the third day most of the passengers are on deck admiring the bold, if low, rocks of Sydney Heads, and showing each other, as they always do, the gorge into which the ship *Dunbar* rushed to her destruction. It is blazing hot, and we prepare to land in sunproof helmets and the thinnest of attire; the compliments of the season pass from mouth to mouth, for though it is midsummer day, it is Christmas morning.

On the bridge, where for a better view of the harbour

we cluster, conversation becomes common property, and I can but hear my immediate neighbours talking of the incongruity of this Antipodean Christmas-tide; of the Christmas bells ringing out over the frozen English land, and the muffled people pausing in their brisk walks to bid each other the compliments of the season; of the misletoe and holly, and the yule log; of all the dear old English customs, best loved when we are out of them.

"Yes, it is Christmas Day," says a lady; "but it brings no Christmas feeling to me."

"Nor to me," chime in the rest.

"It is only a matter of association," says a young Australian; "there's nothing in it."

"I beg your pardon, there is a good deal in it," says the lady, adding, somewhat sadly, "I reverence all such associations, and wish I were surrounded by them now."

"It will be a hot day for the holiday keepers. My word! won't Manly Beach be crowded," says a Sydneyite, homeward bound.

"And one of the pleasantest features of an English Christmas is that evening gathering round the roaring fire, while the snow at one and the same time whitens and silences everything," the lady on the other side says.

"Good morning," breaks in the captain, ascending to his bridge. "We are now in Sydney harbour, the most beautiful in the world. Sydney harbour, ladies and gentlemen."

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Without committing myself to so pronounced an opinion as that which the skipper, in common with the majority of Australians, believes as an article of

faith, I shall not err in saying that Sydney harbour is unique and of surpassing beauty. As point after point is opened up, you begin to understand why a Sydney man, who is not too biased to criticize, will suffer a good deal of dispraise so long as you do not contradict him upon this. He will grant you the confined thoroughfares, and a good deal else into the bargain, so that you give him the harbour. The inhabitants, in truth, are in it blessed with a most precious gift. The price of wool may decline, as it has an ugly habit of doing now and then; drought or flood may come, as it does when least wanted or expected; but nothing, not even the irrepressible Chinese question, can rob them of this inestimable privilege. They have the clear fresh sea at their very doors. In half an hour they may be sailing in a harbour of a hundred bays, complete in themselves, and each with its accompaniment of hill, rock, and wood. Yellow sands ever invite them forth for evening strolls and moonlight rambles.

Before I arrive at the pier I begin to understand why so many travellers rave about Sydney harbour. We are bright enough now. The rain, wind, and sea-sickness having gone, we are rightly attuned by this bright midsummer Christmas morning. Even those to whom every feature of the landscape is familiar betray their delight, which is not at all diminished by the loudly expressed admiration of those who are visiting the capital of New South Wales for the first time. The ships in the harbour and at the distant wharves are gay with flags and evergreens; the sun puts a sparkle into earth, sea, and sky; the faint strains of music, mellowed by transit across the water, come as a carol of incongruously seasonable greeting from shore.

At dinner, however, I cannot, in loyalty to our Christmas Day associations, touch the plum-pudding and mince-pie which, in deference to the occasion, are put upon the table. Iced drinks, bananas, passion fruit, and grapes are more correct Christmas fare for this part of the globe. It is rather to my temper to saunter under umbrella through the Domain and public gardens, and watch the people clustering in every shady nook. The gardener to whom the laying out of these grounds was entrusted, doubtless, had an advantage of situation and conformation which few capitals boast; and he made the most of it. Other gardens may be, though it is doubtful if they are, botanically of greater value, but they have no salt waves breaking upon their boundary wall, no rising ground, no rocky grottoes. The great charm, however, of the Sydney gardens is the profusion of English flowers in the ample borders and beds, and these on this Christmas afternoon are a mass of gorgeous bloom.

The next day I have an opportunity of noting the extent to which the harbour is appreciated. It is one of the sights of the day to watch the people embarking at the numerous steamer landing-places. Take which turning you may, you will be confronted with energetic and perspiring humanity having this in common—they are all streaming to the water-side. It does one's heart good to see so many folks, all well dressed and comfortable looking. The smooth face of the water is furrowed in every direction by steamboats, ranging from the great ocean-going screw to the tiny launch of a few dog-power. Like our London Boxing Day, it is high holiday, but there the contrast ceases.

A number of young gentlemen hospitably make me one of their number on a bachelor water excursion.

We steam out of the bay proper, up an arm known as Middle Harbour, and it is a trip of prolonged delight. We steam several miles, until the hills block our course, and the craft stops in a few inches only of water. It is a reproduction of good Scottish loch scenery, save that for purple heather on the mountains there stand densely growing eucalypti.

To Australians, Sydney has the flavour of antiquity. It is the parent city of all Australian towns, and would be, possibly, the place most worth looting by a foreign invader. Its streets, their traffic, the roomy, comfortable family carriages and demure liveries to be seen at the shop doors, the advertisement columns of the newspapers, all speak of substantial wealth, gradually made and securely held. There is an old-fashioned air about the place not to be seen in other colonies, and evidence of hesitation in making changes, though changes in the directions of improvement are being liberally made. Yet, strange as it may seem for the capital of the wealthiest colony in Australia, the corporation of Sydney in the first quarter of 1879 had to acknowledge itself bankrupt.

Coming to Sydney from London or the larger provincial cities of the British Empire, the visitor must not expect too much; must not forget that ninety years ago the spindle-shanked savages of the country gathered on the beach and defied Captain Phillip and his fleet of convict and store ships, and that even so recently as the last British Reform agitation, a "Botany Bay view" of things was deemed an applicable reference in House of Commons' debate. Sydney, then, must not be measured by a home standard if the measurement is to be a fair one. This may seem to smack of apology. In truth, it does. The main streets of central Sydney are too

narrow, and the fashion in which its founders began their work will be a perpetual reason why it cannot be made, through its streets and buildings, a beautiful city. There are many really fine buildings, the houses of business are thriving, and Sydney has the advantage of being the one great seaport of the colony. But its boast must be of solid comfortable prosperity, rather than of exterior magnificence.

The suburbs of Sydney, however, are growing in beauty, and, like the city itself, give evidence of substantial wealth and a certain soberness of living that is not unpleasing to English eyes. Great pride is being taken in the cultivation of English flowers, shrubs, and umbrageous trees; and attempts have been made, with partial success, to acclimatize larks and the English singing birds. Up the Parramatta river the finest orange gardens in the colony flourish. There are many excursions to interesting spots on the coast which may be compassed in the course of the day; and if the visitor cares for gorgeous mountain scenery he can obtain it by making a trip up the famous zigzag railway into the Blue Mountains. And Sydney, as if conscious of the narrowness of its streets and imperfect design, it is but right to add, does make amends, wherever possible, by surrounding its public buildings with open grounds and shrubberies.

At home, Boxing Day would have finished, in all probability, at the pantomime; at Sydney it closes, for me, with a lounging chair and cheroot in the hotel verandah. I drop into my seat just as three disputants, inhabitants of different Australian colonies, are opening fire upon each other. The object of each appears to be to prove his own particular colony the best. On the face of it the discussion would indicate that the fiercest

rivalry and hatred exists between the colonies, and that they are divided by mighty oceans, instead of by imaginary boundary lines. One man fights the battles of Queensland like a Trojan.

Turning to the other two, he says, "You think a world too much of yourselves. You fancy you are the whole of Australia. Look in the English newspapers: in their eyes Australia is Melbourne, and Melbourne only. Both of you come and take our Queensland cedar without let or license, and it is quoted as New South Wales produce. Now, Queensland is richest of all the colonies in valuable timber and in minerals. By Jove, Queensland will lead you all yet; we can grow everything there, from turnips to pineapples, from beef to tea, coffee, and sugar."

"Bravo, bravo, for Queensland!" cry a chorus of voices.

"It will be a great day for us all," another interposes, "when a big wave of free trade sweeps away all the cursed tariffs, and dovetails our interests into one machine."

"Very good," replied a third, "that means Federation."

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The voyage from Sydney to Melbourne is more interesting than the previous stage. You are within sight of the mountain ranges the whole of the first and part of the second day; the vessel occasionally runs within a mile or two of land, so close, indeed, that the bare ash-grey trunks of the gum trees are plainly visible. We begin to feel a difference in the temperature, and are glad to unpack our wraps and shawls.

Wilson's Promontory is a remarkably bold cape of solid rock, with a mountainous back country. The

lighthouse seems a solitary place for habitation, but it might be possible to find a man who, if he had plenty of rations and a few books, would not object to find protection on that isolated perch, against the hurly-burly of the world. Bass Strait marks an era in the voyage, for it is here you turn the corner of Eastern Australia.

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Melbourne, alone of Australian capitals, may be measured by an old country standard without suffering by comparison. As it stands it is a grand city; criticised in the light of its history, it is wonderful. More than any other town, the capital of Victoria may be termed the colony itself. New South Wales has its Liverpool Plains, Riverina, and New England; Queensland, its tropical north land, and its rich back country vast as a large European kingdom; Victoria has Melbourne. Trollope, in his book upon the colonies—for which many colonials will never forgive him, but which, take it all in all, the visitor may accept as the best guide at his disposal—advises the Australians not to "blow." As a rule, the advice is wholesome; yet a Victorian has a right to "blow" about Melbourne, just as the New South Welshman has a right to blow about Sydney harbour, the Queenslander about the magnificent resources of his colony, and the South Australian about his wheat, and, in a minor key, his wine. But foremost let the Victorian have his blow about Melbourne.

Melbourne is gay. The Melbourne native prides himself upon the peculiarly English character of his city, but, in truth, there is just a *soupçon* of Americanism perceptible. The sober Englishman, surveying the scene from the grand stand on a Melbourne Cup day, or promenading Collins Street or Bourke Street in the

afternoon, when the representatives of the leisure classes are, as it is locally termed, "doing the block," would probably imagine that Melbourne was a very fast city. The dresses of some of the ladies who "lead the fashions," maybe, are apt to run to extremes, something after the manner of a New York girl hot from a continental scamper; but there is a brightness in the place and sky that will admit of plenty of dressing, and even invites it, and the fastness, as yet at any rate, is only upon the surface. The wonder is that in a colony whose aristocracy is one of wealth, pure and simple, the ostentation should not be greater. What there is of literature, art, drama, and music in Australia has its head-quarters at Melbourne. It has the finest free library, the best theatre and concert halls. Its people are pleasure loving, and provide themselves with the best amusements within their reach. In work, as in play, they believe in briskness. A *bonâ fide* Melbourne man would consider residence in any other Australian capital banishment.

The fathers of Melbourne were wiser in their generation than those of Sydney and Brisbane. Like the founders of Adelaide, they planned their city well, insisting upon broad thoroughfares and plenty of open spaces, and jealously guarding them even when building-allotments in the principal streets fetched three hundred pounds per foot. The city was built on the square, with sufficient main thoroughfares, and smaller streets running parallel and doing good duty as reliefs. The largest arteries being established as a principle, a liberal supply of lungs was superadded; so that you may walk six miles diagonally across Melbourne, and at no time be more than a couple of hundred yards from some sort of a garden, shrubbery, or reserve.

Many of the public edifices are imposing; but the beauty of Melbourne city springs from a uniformity of solid comeliness in architecture, and the fine fresh distances. Yet in 1853 it was a community of weather-boards and canvas. In all parts of Australia you meet with men who enthusiastically recall the glorious times when they dwelt in tents and made fortunes in the infant city on the banks of the dirty little rushing Yarra. The miscellaneous man who could turn his hand to anything was here in clover. Then, as always in the colonies, an industrious Jack-of-all-trades found himself in his right place. One of the most prosperous of modern Australian ironmongers landed in Victoria in those times. At home he had been a wholesale warehouseman; in Melbourne he looked about him and went into the business of a plumber, of which he knew next to nothing, but which, while he was picking up the rudiments, brought him a pound a day wages.

In Melbourne King People rules, and the visitor who is a politician may amuse himself by attacking the knotty point which such a statement will raise. Apart from its political aspect, he may profitably investigate the condition of the working classes of Melbourne. They are the absolute owners of some of the suburbs. An acquaintance of mine the other day, wishing to rent a pretty suburban residence, sought the landlord, and found him working as labourer in a timber-yard. I could mention one building society out of many which has lent over a million of money, chiefly to working men. The thickly populated suburbs of East Collingwood, Prahran, Hotham, Emerald Hill, and Carlton are, to a considerable extent, owned by working men. They are the Victorian democracy of whom

so much has been heard, not, however, to be classed with the "unwashed" of other lands, nor even to be called the residuum; they are well-to-do individually, who have organized themselves into a formidable controlling power. In the heat of political strife hard words are natural; but to apply the term "mob," or "rabble," to such working men would be libel. They have comfortable houses; they may be seen quietly reading in the magnificent Free Library; in the Acclimatization Grounds in the Royal Park; under the elms, poplars, and pines of Carlton Gardens; in the cricket grounds of Richmond or Albert Parks; in the trains running down to the Sandridge shipping. I doubt whether there is any city in the world where the working classes are so prosperous as in Melbourne.

That there is a serious question beneath, the visit of the Victoria embassy to Downing Street shows. I pass it by, merely observing that a gentleman, to whom I was expressing admiration of the apparent comfort of the working classes in Melbourne, said, "Ay, Protection makes them prosperous, prosperity makes them bumptious, and there will be a grand smash by-and-by." I am no logician, but I know he represents a very widespread opinion amongst the Melbourne merchant class.

The landscape surroundings of Melbourne are poor. At St. Kilda and Brighton by the seaside, and at Hawthorne, Kew, and Terac on the Yarra—all suburbs inhabited by the wealthiest people—there are fine residences and elaborately cultivated grounds; and for a summer morning ride the dairy farms of Heidelberg and the market gardens of Cheltenham are an agreeable contrast to the pretentious villa and crowded city centre. Further afield, five and twenty miles from

town, into genuine Victoria bush, there is Fern Tree Gully, with its grand tree-ferns; or, still further, there is the Australian Alpine scenery of Healasville, Fernshaw, and Woods Point—the latter with its mountain gold-field, which was fabulously wealthy for a time, and which, in its dream of permanent gold, erected stone buildings now wellnigh deserted.

A miner from this field went to Melbourne for a "spell," and, strolling into the bank one morning, was accosted by the manager with—

"Ah, good morning. I don't know whether you are aware of it, but there has been ten thousand pounds lying here for you more than a month."

The man knocked the ash from his cigar, and drawled, "No; I heard nothing about it. It's all right, I suppose. Chalk it up."

His mates working the claim up in the mountain had forwarded him the amount as his share of the proceeds during his holiday. That was in the golden era; the man is, likely enough, splitting rails now, or driving a milk-cart.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST BLOOD.

Fishing at Sydney and Melbourne—The Yarra Yarra; its merits and defects—Across Bass Strait—The valley of the Tamar—Launceston town and suburbs—Distillery Creek—Cora Linn—Caught with a black gnat—St. Patrick's river—The duck-bill platypus.

SYDNEY has been pleasant, and so has Melbourne, turned upside down though they have been, the one by Christmas festivities, the other by New Year observances. At the former there is good sea-fishing to be had outside the heads, the hauls of schnapper being often reckoned by the hundredweight; at the latter there is a well-organized angling club, which can tell you of capabilities, including a few native fish that coarsely take a coarse fly, English perch acclimatized in some of the inland lakes, and dreams of future salmon and trout. Chance does not, however, bring me into contact with the angling worthies of these colonies, and I must confess that, after all the holiday hubbub, it is a relief to find myself at the Queen's Wharf, on board the steamer that is to convey me over the third stage of the voyage. Nay, more, it is a relief based on hope, for, all going

well, in thirty hours I shall be in the neighbourhood of trout, and ready to have at them.

The Yarra Yarra, down which we sail into Bass Strait, has hitherto been famous for its defects as a means of approach to Melbourne, and for its offensive impurities; although in its higher reaches it is a picturesque little stream, thanks chiefly to the profusion of willows along its banks, which willows sprang from a cutting brought from Napoleon's tomb at St. Helena, by an American ship which put in there for water. But the Yarra has been now surveyed by an eminent English engineer, who has produced a scheme that is to make it a second Clyde, and is to reclaim the marshes which mark the dreary interval between the river and portions of the city.

As we steam down the muddy tide, it is forced upon the observant mind that passengers occupying the decks of steam-vessels sailing out of the river Yarra present a comical appearance to spectators watching them from the unlovely banks. Fortunately, however, for sensitive persons who have a constitutional objection to being laughed at, the swampy country around is of so desolate a character that none but ill-fated individuals, compelled to be there for business purposes, will linger near the stinking stream. And here you may observe how admirably in this world one thing compensates for another. You may leave the Queen's Wharf, Melbourne, bowed down with grief and heavy with sorrow; yet long ere you have passed the fell-mongering establishments which pollute the Yarra and poison the atmosphere, you shall have forgotten all your troubles in the bad odours which force themselves upon your attention. In the spring of the present year (1879), the inspector of fisheries has reported

salmon of from nine to twelve inches long in the Yarra, making their way from the breeding places to the sea. I pity them when they arrive at this point.

To-day is highly favourable to the potency of stench, so that, perhaps even more than according to custom, the passengers, on nearing the fellmongering quarter, clap their handkerchiefs to their noses; and the spectacle of thirty or forty ladies and gentlemen in such an attitude is so grotesque that some of us, by one consent, burst into laughter, albeit we are soon forced, in self-defence, to adopt the same precaution as that which provoked our mirth.

But we shall sniff

"The odour of brine from the ocean"

with double zest after this experience, and, it must be admitted, hope is not long deferred. The boat glides quickly out of the river amongst the ships and yachts of the breezy open roadstead, and the city of Melbourne, with its populous suburbs rising solidly up from the stretches of sandy beach, adds much and is indispensable to the fullness of the prospect. It is well, perhaps, after all, that the surroundings of Melbourne from this point of view are so miserable; the dismal levels are a good foil to the larger buildings and rising masses of houses conspicuous beyond.

The run across Bass Strait is for once short and comfortable. For a few hours only are you without sight of land, and on the morning of the second day the impalpable cloud far away to the south-west is known to be the interesting island that waits so patiently for the tide in its affairs that will lead it on to prosperity, and that only requires to be better known to be better appreciated.

Melbourne and Launceston are not much more than four and twenty hours apart, should wind and weather permit, and the Tamar monopolizes three or four hours, reducing the terrors of the sea by that space of time, offering the passengers relays of landscapes on either side, and altogether predisposing a new-comer towards the country.

"Where streams abound,
How laughs the land with various plenty crowned!"

Verily! Beyond the region of the river there are evidences of drought far and near. The herbage on the further hills is almost yellow, and the foliage of the trees upon the ridges seems to be thirsty and spiritless; yet close to the life-giving stream, grass, corn, orchards, and gardens give signs of green abounding life, and refuse, so long as the friendly river ebbs and flows, to wither or decline. The Tamar does not, as many of the Tasmanian rivers do, rush furiously between prison walls of hoary crag, perpetually angered at the check imposed upon its freedom. It rejoices in, and is, apparently, proud of, a broad smiling valley which it diligently fertilizes to the very feet of the mountains bounding the verdurous expanse.

Launceston, where we first touch Tasmanian soil, when you improve your acquaintance with it, is a pretty agreeable town; seen from the river at low tide, when the steamer has to anchor in mid-stream, and the passengers have to land in small boats, it does not impress you very favourably, the adjacent wharves and streets being a trifle straggling in appearance, especially to people who are influenced by the bustle and anxiety consequent upon going ashore, and whose glance is therefore hurried and unconsidered.

Around the town there are fine drives, and views

from the hills beyond. Naturally, there is a spirit of rivalry between Launceston in the north, and Hobart Town in the south; they would not be colonial towns if this curious condition of things did not exist. In Victoria and New South Wales the metropolitan cities are so much beyond any other towns in their respective colonies that this rivalry is scarcely felt; but in Queensland, where there are four or five good seaport towns, each claiming place in the front rank, it is carried to such a degree that, at an election in one of the metropolitan constituencies, the friends of the two candidates raised the cry of North and South Brisbane interests, the two being only separated by a river, and the population of all Brisbane not exceeding thirty thousand.

But Launceston is less favoured by circumstances and by nature than Hobart Town, and must content itself with whatever self-satisfaction arises from the fact that it is the only port of arrival and departure at the northern end of the colony. Yet on the evening of my landing I find some lovely bits of scenery while accompanying a moonlight boating party up the picturesque gorge of the South Esk, to the Cataract. The river is here walled in by precipitous rocks; the young ladies of the party declare with unquestioned truth that the channel of the river has been specially formed to re-echo boating songs and glees; and they might have added, if familiarity had not accustomed them to it, that under the reign of the Southern Cross there is such moonlight as British islanders never dream of.

In the colonies introductions are generally made without much formality, and there still remains a preponderance of really hospitable people, who love

to entertain strangers out of pure kindliness of travel. This is especially the case in country towns and districts, and amongst men who have in common the universal freemasonry of sport. Thus, next morning, I am taken in hand by a couple of worthy Launcestonians, shown the sights of the place, and taken out in a buggy to Cora Linn in the Perth district. By way of the racecourse we drive through a lane almost impassable with boulders and briars, but, as usual, the end gained is full compensation. Below, enriching the fat glebe, is the Esk and its pastoral valley, telling a tale of corn, and wine, and oil. At one point glimpses are obtained of the two rivers—the North Esk, winding slowly through golden cornfields, and meadows inhabited by lowing herds; and the Tamar, a broad silver shield in the distance.

At Distillery Creek a visit is paid, that the stranger may see with his own eyes the rivulet in which the first trout was put ten years ago. The fish have thriven apace; so much so that, during the last season, a big brown trout, roaming from his pool, was suddenly surprised in the stream in the garden—a stream so tiny that a child might step across it. The mill, without warning, stopped, and his troutship, having neglected to secure a line of retreat, was, in colonial parlance, "bailed up." Though but thirty-two inches long, this noble specimen of the *Salmo fario* turned the scale at fifteen pounds.

Turning out of the road, we are ere long in a miniature paradise. Overhung with weeping willows, laburnums, lilacs, and periwinkles, drooping downward until the glossy leaves kiss the crystal flood, the brook makes everlasting music, and the foliage overhead gives never-ending, but always-varying, shade. Rustic

bridges cross it; rustic seats invite the indolent to repose in all sorts of nooks and corners. The garden at once recalls the words of the banker poet:—

> "Mine be a cot beside the hill,
> A beehive's hum shall soothe my ear;
> A willowy brook that turns a mill,
> With many a fall, shall linger near."

Tracing the brook upwards, we trample through long grass, wild brier, and shrubs in which the silver wattle and the Lombardy poplar grow in beauty side by side, and amongst which I observe a marsh-mallow flourishing as a tree two feet higher than myself: then comes the time-worn, dripping mill-wheel, which the stream turns in its passage from the parent dam thirteen hundred feet above the sea level.

The road, after this halt, continues over the valley, and through quiet English village scenery. Here is a closely clipped hedge of sweet-brier, at least ten feet high and six feet through; there, rustled by the passing breeze, and warm in the afternoon sun, are shocks of full-eared wheat. Now there are ricks of corn, and now dark-brown stacks of silver wattle bark; sleek Berkshire pigs rooting in the stubble; grey rocks pushing themselves outward to remind you that basalt country will produce a crop of its own in spite of high cultivation. In the village of St. Leonard's turkeys gobble in the street, and children make mud-pies on the edge of the pavement. It is thoroughly English, save and except the vast white pyramids of smoke indicating bush fires in the further mountain range.

Cora Linn is a wild and imposing ravine, a deep rocky gorge, through which the North Esk madly rushes. The rocks, some of which stand pulpit-like out of the

foaming flood, are most fantastic in shape, and the platforms and terraces of rock on either side of the bridge afford you standing points from which many strikingly contrasting views may be obtained. Mosses, lichens, ferns, flowers, and shrubs spring blooming from the fissures, and you have a distant panorama of low-land beauty where the impetuous charge of the river is exchanged for the most placid of currents, and soft verdure offers living green in lieu of the sombre tints of hoary rocks.

In his delightful essay on Trout Fishing, the author of "Country House Essays"—quoting, by the way, from an innocent paragraph in one of my own chapters—says, not of me, but of the apologetic angler in the abstract, "The hypocrite! As if the scenery were the inducement, and not the rod." We should, of course, be hypocrites, consummate and self-condemned, if we pretended that scenery was the sole inducement; but I can honestly say for myself that the angler has to contend against so many adverse conditions, and must prepare himself for so many blank days, that angling would never have been my passion had there not been that other inducement, offered without money and without price, by nature, in compensation. The two always go together.

At Cora Linn, therefore, I first survey the surroundings, all the time conscious, no doubt, that the surface of the water in the immediate neighbourhood is being involuntarily watched, as it were by one eye, eager to detect upon the outskirts of the agitated foam, or upon the gliding or rippling stream, the faintest disturbance indicative of trout. Two or three small fish leap out of the water in that peculiar and unmistakable plunge which the angler does not care to see, for, if anything, it generally means, "Not to-day, my friend; not to-day."

But did ever the promise of no sport keep the angler from making an attempt? Out comes the rod from the apron-straps of the buggy; my friends give me ten minutes as the limit of their patience, and in two minutes over that span I return with an eight-inch trout picked close from a bit of overhanging rock on the opposite margin, with a small black gnat. It is not much to brag of, but it is first blood, and on that account, as an act of grace, I give the fish its liberty, and watch it disappear, apparently none the worse for a temporary absence from its native element.

A twelve-mile ride in a spring cart over a hilly road liberally paved with bucket-sized boulders, and in the cool air of early morning, gives one a fine appetite, and has other effects less desirable, but to reach St. Patrick's river a stoutly built cart is the most suitable means of conveyance. The scenery is wild, and the stream towards which we jolt of favourable repute amongst anglers. It is affected by a few Launceston trouting gentlemen, is crossed by an ingenious wire suspension bridge, and offers for the sportsman's accommodation a rustic temple of Walton close to the stream. There is no lack of trout, though they are disagreeably shy of me, and also of the young gentleman whom I may term —so energetic is he in preserving the water—the high-priest of the temple. The fish at this time are gorged with grasshoppers, and will not rise at a fly.

For a while it seems incredible that the fish which I know to be here will refuse the flies culled in the old days at Winchester, Worcester, Dublin, South and North Wales, Derby, Scotland, and Yorkshire. I try them all with but poor result, and my guide, the high-priest, tells me the best sport is had fishing with grasshopper, and that, amongst artificial flies, the favourites

are the Cholmondeley-Pennell description. It is small consolation to be told further that I am two months late in the season, unless I swallow my prejudices and descend to the coarser lures, and that the only periods at which the artificial fly is effectual are early spring to late autumn, when the grasshoppers are not. However, we do get trout, brown trout, well fed and coloured, and we see numbers of big fish too lazy to move.

Upon the weatherboards of the temple walls, limned with charcoal from the wood fire, are the rough portraits and measurements of notable trout taken from the river, some remarkably broad and thick in proportion to their length. The gentlemen who own this temple of Walton, as I christen it, come and camp here, when they have an opportunity, for three and four days together; and very pleasant it must be, for, in addition to the bush surroundings, there is not a river in Tasmania that has generally a more trouty look. Seated on a log outside the temple, at our mid-day rest, I can but remember romantic Dovedale, in our English Derbyshire, and Cotton's fishing house, and how Cotton says he has dedicated it to anglers, and twisted the first two letters of father Walton's name and his own in ciphers over the door. I remember how he promises that his honoured visitor shall sleep in the same bed occupied by the immortal Izaak, and have welcome country entertainment. To be sure, our Tasmanian Waltonians have no lavender-scented sheets when they come hither; sacks of straw on bare boards answer very well, and they cook their own viands and rough it, angler-like, in a hearty and lovable manner. If I can find it, I will send to my good-natured high-priest a copy of the rules drawn up by Brinsley Sheridan for the once famous Hampshire Angling Club at Leckford. He may

post them up beside the great seven and nine pound St. Patrick's trout, whose portraits, as I have said, are sketched in bold outline upon the slabs within.

Up the stream an object which cannot be fish, is not fowl, but which does appear to be flesh of some description, is coming at intervals to the surface. The river at that point is broad and sluggish, for there is a weir intervening. On hands and knees, looking out for snakes (two venomous specimens of which I have encountered already), I crawl up to reconnoitre. The object is apparently aware of my manœuvre, for it no longer comes to the surface. I can wait, and if it be anything in the amphibious line of life I shall have the best of it in the long run. As I do.

The object slowly, and without creating a ripple, emerges—a dark-brown, sleek, velvety affair. By-and-by it emerges a little more and more, finally scenting strangers, and going down swiftly and in silence. At first I imagine it is a beaver who has borrowed a duck's bill for masquerading purposes, and then I remember the duck-bill platypus pictures of the natural history books, and recognize that the object is that curious creature. Within an hour I see another in the same reach of the river; it is basking on the top, and, catching sight of me, turns a hasty somersault before it goes down to look after its private business. Its habits are so little known * that it is not clear what that private

* After I had written the above I had an opportunity of comparing notes with a gentleman (Mr. Armitt) who, during fourteen years of duty in the native police in tropical Australia, amongst other scientific inquiries, made a study of the duck-bill platypus. He says that it seldom shows more than its bill above water; that it lays black eggs more round than, but nearly the size of, a pigeon's egg; that it tunnels a passage horizontally into the bank, from one to three feet under water, gradually bores upwards until it has

business may be, or where its offices and storehouses are situated, but the duck-like bill undoubtedly plays an important part in its daily avocations at the bottom of the water.

The platypus is as common in Tasmania as in Australia; it occurs in all the colonies, but is a comparative rarity everywhere. The trout do not appear to have any constitutional objection to the *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*. There were two rising within a couple of yards of the second specimen, as it lay like a small turtle on the surface of the water, and the part of the river in which it and its mate were presumably located, seeing that they were often visible on quiet summer evenings, was known to be the head-quarters of several large trout.

reached a point above the water level, and then hollows out a chamber for a nest; that the blacks, who eat it, drive it into a passage, the mouth of which a diver, relieved as often as necessary, keeps closed with grass; that the spurs on the legs, generally supposed to be non-venomous, are always treated as poisonous by the natives, who do not commonly err in such matters; and that the animal does not roam beyond the hole over which he has fixed his home.—W. S.

CHAPTER IV.

CAVES AND CATTLE.

Old country names—Launceston and Western Railway—The Meander—Bush on fire—Phantom horseman—Ravages of the fire—Caves—Unadorned nature—The young Tasmanian—Fun and frolic on the road—Wild cattle—Full chase—The strawberry bull: a noted character.

From Launceston you may journey, by the ably managed little Government railway, west, and become acquainted with many of the rivers which, running in a direct northerly direction, fall into Bass Strait. There is no portion of Tasmania that is not freely watered; but the northern counties, Wellington, Devon, and Dorset, are unusually well supplied with perpetually flowing streams, rejoicing, according to the custom of the land, in names borrowed from the old country. We have the Tamar, Esk (North and South), Mersey, Liffey, Cam, Trent, Don, Forth, and Leven. Most of these are, or will be, trout rivers, and dwelling upon each, though it may not far exceed the dimensions of a rivulet, you shall ever find persons who tell you confidentially that to them, and them alone, was entrusted the honour of depositing the first young fish. It is evidence at least of the importance they attach to

the subject that, according to their own showing, three-fourths of the male population of the country have with their own hands deposited salmon and trout in the rivers.

The district we traverse by the Launceston and Western Railway is in many respects the most highly cultivated in Tasmania; it bears the aspect of comfortable and mature settlement—the aspect of level grain lands, and gently watered pastures. The mountains, as the journey progresses to its terminus at Deloraine (which is forty-five miles due west from Launceston), show out grandly in the eager air of a somewhat frosty evening. From the railway train a magnificent view is afforded of the Western Tier, some of whose summits and peaks in the peculiar atmosphere assume lovely tints of purple; while Quamby's Bluff, an abrupt and notable mountain, appears through an impalpable gauze of delicate French grey.

The unseasonable coldness of the weather, and the continued lowness and brightness of the water, induce a resolve not to waste time in fishing the Meander, which runs through the village of Deloraine. We accordingly, after some trouble, procure a conveyance: one of the practical carts of the country which, by its severe restraints, inflicts the cramp upon him who rides in front, and, by its unyielding construction, subjects him who rides behind to terrible joltings. In this machine we are to visit certain renowned caves, of which we have heard much, and are to halt for the night, *en route*, about four miles out of Deloraine. As we drive across the bridge, watching the anglers on the river banks below, I am nearly tempted to upset all previously made arrangements, a lady sitting by the side of a gentlemen having, at the moment the cart

rumbles past, switched a nice trout boldly out of the water and far into the bushes behind her. Here the river, moreover, has a most likely appearance. But my comrade pronounces strongly against vacillation, and the cart thereupon jogs up the road, as the twilight becomes no light at all and the brilliant stars announce the positive advent of night.

The hospitable gentleman at whose house we are to sleep is from home when we alight, and a ruddy glare in the sky beyond the crown of the hill explains the cause of his absence. The bush is on fire, and he is an extensive landowner. Partly to warm ourselves after our cold ride, and partly to meet our host, having deposited our luggage, we stroll towards the brow which intercepts our view of the burning country.

From the eminence a strange spectacle lies before us. It is singular and even grand in its weirdness. The white glistening trunks of the gum trees reflect the flickering shadows thrown up by the blazing undergrowth; wreaths of smoke roll, blood-tinted, into the darkness; and the fire and the smoke combined make the bush for the time being resemble a great, gloomy pine forest of illimitable space, while the men and women, busy in their endeavours to save the fences, are converted into the grotesque spirits of some infernal region. In their midst, a phantom man, upon a phantom horse, both of gigantic size, directs their movements, and, as he moves hither and thither, seems to be at times swallowed up or absorbed by the huge, awesome shadows. Soon a heavy gust of wind passes by, raising showers of sparks, fanning the noisy flames, and dispersing the curtains of smoke. It carries the swift destruction of merciless fire on its wings, and a hoarse sound, like the distant sea moaning and rising,

accompanies its march through the woods. Crashes, invested with new terrors in the unseen associations of flame-haunted night, resound from afar, telling of ponderous trees laid low.

Scenes somewhat similar I have witnessed in the Queensland bush, but they are new to my companion, upon whom they make a strong impression, which impression is the more firmly fixed by the report next morning that, within a few miles of the place where we rest, two brothers have been killed by the fall of the same tree, about the hour when we stood watching the conflagration. Bush fires have unfortunately been very rife of late in this district, and numerous mishaps have occurred.

The phantom rider turns out to be the host himself, from whom, amidst many apologies for his grimy appearance, we receive a welcome truly colonial in its heartiness. A cheerful fire blazes in the wide chimney of his roomy house, and while the host and my comrade, with a neighbour who has dropped in, talk of cattle and sheep, and wheat and land, your humble servant, musing before the burning logs on the hearth, dozes and dozes in his armchair until he is lost in the fascinations of dreamland, which now take the shape of an enchanted recess of the Hartz Mountains, peopled with gnomes and imps, rioting in some fiendish revelry.

The movements of dairy cattle and clatter of milking pails under the windows rouse us in the early morning, and while breakfast is preparing we walk into the garden, to enjoy the crisp air and freshen our palates with newly gathered fruit. Cherries hang overhead like semi-transparent globes of ruby glass; herbs and flowers, ivy and woodbine, fruit and vegetables, flourish

in profusion, convincing philosophic visitors, like ourselves, more than ever that Tasmania ought to be not only the sanatorium, but the great kitchen garden, of the whole of Australia.

During our drive after breakfast we meet with overwhelming evidence of the ravages committed by the conflagration of the previous evening. Immense trees, partly charred and still smouldering, lie across the highway; into the trunks of others close to the road the fire has eaten until but a few inches of frail support is left; twice, in short succession, trees fall without warning within a few yards of the cart; the horse's fetlocks are singed during a detour into the bush, rendered necessary by a fallen blue gum which lies breast-high across the path; sometimes we fain hold our breath while close to a tree, the smell of whose burning comes hot in our faces, and which cannot stand half an hour longer.

It is like travelling through a yellow fog in Fleet Street on a November day; but after four miles of suffocation, crackle, and some danger, the limits of the fire are passed, and the cart emerges from the smoke into the delicious freshness of pure morning air and the brightness of open country enclosed with the customary hedges of hawthorn, sweet-brier, and gorse. Yonder are the mountain ranges bathed in bland sunshine, and were we able to ascend Quamby's Bluff, which we now survey from another aspect, we might, in the singular nearness of all distant objects, behold one of the sights for which the district is famous.

But we are bent upon exploring certain caves, and to the caves we are guided by a young urchin at whose father's homestead the horse and cart are left. This show place certainly deserves all the praise which is

lavished upon it, and as much because of the mountain scenery of the neighbourhood as of the extraordinary caverns in the limestone to which pilgrimages are made. How many caves, spacious enough to accommodate large congregations, there may be, has never been decided, but they are very numerous, though the most popular are termed respectively the New and the Old Caves.

To us, who have visited the caves at Cheddar, in Somersetshire—the most perfect stalactite formations in miniature to be found probably in Europe—the striking features of these Tasmanian caverns are their vast extent, and the exquisite natural grotto-work marking the descent to them.

No showman has laid his improving hand upon the approaches; everything bears the wild picturesqueness of unadorned nature, and is therefore adorned the most. Rare ferns and rich, cool, damp green mosses cover the stones, from which you step across the limpid brook, with bottom of bright golden sand, issuing icy cold from the dark mouth of the main entrance. In one of those caverns you may penetrate for two miles under the white stalactite roof, which, as in all stalactite and stalagmite formations, assumes the most fantastic forms and combination of forms; the icy rivulet is ever present at your feet, continuing its dark journey from some upper spring in the heart of the rock. The light of the candles carried by the visitor, of course, gives enchantment to the silent underground halls, with their numerous ante-caves and dark abysses.

Not caring to wade continually across the brook rushing down from its unknown source in the bowels of the earth through the pitch darkness, we are content with half a mile or so of penetration into the cavern,

and, having duly admired the peculiarities of the chief apartment, return to daylight and to luncheon, outspread upon a mossy stone at the entrance.

In the mountain ranges of this part of the island there are a number of wild cattle, the hunting of which, partly for business and partly for pleasure, affords the inhabitants around exciting sport. Occasional hunting expeditions are accordingly got up, and the meet having been announced to the few, the ride to the scene of action is one of the pleasantest portions of the day's proceedings. It so happens that such an expedition has been fixed for one of the days included in our stay in these parts, and as there are some romantic falls to be visited, estates to be ridden over, and trout, cucumber mullet, blackfish, and tench to be caught in the interim, it is no hardship to remain in order to witness, and perhaps take part in, the sport. The landlord of the inn at which we stop during our stay is a most obliging young fellow, and by his aid the chief difficulty, namely, the procuring of horses, is surmounted.

The trip gives us an admirable opportunity of observing the sort of stuff of which young Tasmania is made. I have often heard it said, in other colonies, that Tasmania is so poor a place commercially that all the young men emigrate when they arrive at years of maturity, and here I already begin to perceive that the accusation is not without its understratum of truth. Young men in Tasmania are not numerous, but they are a good specimen of strong, healthy complexioned humanity, and altogether more robust in appearance than the "cornstalks" of the more wealthy Australian colonies.

It is a merry party that sets out in search of wild

cattle. Starting from the village after an early breakfast, when the rime still whitens the grass in shady spots, when the edge of the cold is blunted, yet when the sun is not too high in the heavens, everybody is in high spirits, or will speedily arrive at that enviable condition through contagion. The sportsmen are well mounted, for Tasmania still maintains its prestige in horse-breeding; the country to be passed over offers fair going, and no rider seems to fear knocking up his horse before the actual business begins. The animals, recognizing by the tone of their master's voice that it is to be a stick-at-nothing kind of day, are in bounding high spirits also, and enter into the fun and frolic of the road out of pure equine delight. With whoop and laugh the youngsters career off the track through the bush, or into the paddocks, flying over all that comes in their way. Booted and spurred, but otherwise dressed without any regard to pattern or fashion, they are a good type of the free, independent, lusty colonial, who enjoys life with a gusto Old World city men can little understand.

Riding after cattle is a sport which requires experience, and I am free to confess myself a novice in the true sense of the word. My comrade, as a young squatter, is, of course, familiar with the work; but he is not well mounted, and the country for which we are bound is extremely mountainous and rocky. The most we can, therefore, hope to do is to see the beginning of the hunt, and follow the chase as closely as we can when the pace waxes too hot.

Well mounted, strong-wristed, fearless and quick, and ready with spur at the right moment, you need apprehend little danger from the cattle themselves; but the sport is extremely exciting when the beasts, like

those we seek, are thoroughly wild—born wild of ancestors which have inhabited the mountain fastnesses for perhaps more than half a century. "Wild," however, is a word which can only be applied by courtesy. The pedigree, if it had been recorded, would end, after all, in a snug farmyard, stall-feeding, and the milking pail. The cattle are not naturally wild like the buffalo, nor even wild after the manner of the Chillingham cattle, which distinguished personages shoot from a hay-cart.

But they run for their lives. They look upon man as their foe; and, when hard pressed, they will turn about and do their best to rend you. Ordinarily the wild cattle, so called, of Australia may be tamed, and are frequently tamed sufficiently for marketable purposes; but the Tasmanian mountaineers are not of that ilk. No efforts to reduce them to even a show of docility succeed, and all attempts to utilize them, save for sport, fail.

Dogs, of course, accompany the party—dogs of all sorts and sizes. Breed, colour, and general moral character are not inquired into; the only requisite insisted upon is that the brutes should be *au fait* with cattle. The finest dog in the present company—and the exceptional circumstance is noticed—is a grand old deerhound, the description of dog Landseer loved to paint. But there are retrievers, kangaroo hounds, a pointer or two, and a host of nondescripts.

Once on the ground, men and dogs disperse and spread through the mountainous forest. On the flat, or downhill, the horse, in the long run, can out distance cattle; though for a burst of ten or fifteen minutes, when the cattle are in good condition—which with wild cattle means the reverse of good from a farmer's

point of view—and when the herd pursued are cows, which are as a rule the fleetest, a fast horse has to put forth his best powers to keep alongside the game. The country now hunted is, therefore, in favour of the cattle, and, by long experience, they seem quite aware of the fact. On the side of the hunters there is this advantage—there is no scrub (into which hunted cattle always fly for refuge) within several miles of the range. Inaccessible gullies and ravines, however, abound.

By-and-by the dogs give tongue, and there is a sound, not far distant, indicating a stampede. The horsemen, neck or nothing, set off in pursuit. How, on these occasions, man and beast escape braining from the branches under which they dash, or general smashing from the great trees between which they gallop at full speed—by what instinct a horse madly galloping knows that a dozen yards more will bring him to the edge of a precipice, and, acting upon that knowledge, swerves of his own accord at the precise moment, and saves his own and his rider's neck by taking a sideling cattle track—how, on a sudden emergency, the sensible animal will instantaneously check his impetuosity, "prop," and swing round at a tangent—these are questions which the neophyte asks himself many a time during one of these exciting mornings.

You may not intend joining in the hunt, but when the party has warmed into excitement, and the horses have imbibed the intoxicating spirit of the chase, you ooner or later find yourself going with the rest, and revelling in the work. At first the course is along a ridge, and then, without reflection or check, down a steep declivity. Quite unused to this style of riding, though not greatly a coward, I am wide awake to the

possibilities of mischief, and find time to say to my comrade, as we gallop for a moment neck and neck—

"We're in for it, I suppose?"

"Yes," he shouts, half pulled out of the saddle. "Leave it all to the horse. There's nothing for it now."

The foremost men in the hunt have crossed the gully at the bottom of the slope, are at close quarters with the laggards of the herd, and taking flying pistol-shots at them as they race abreast over rocks, through dense bush, and upon ground which, in sober moments, the most daring would shrink from. For the remainder of my own share in the sport I shall maintain silence—whether of prudence or modesty signifies nothing. Suffice to say I am learning what everybody does learn in the colonies—that you may pass through a marvellous number of accidents without coming, as the saying goes, to grief, and that when you are, unknown to yourself, mounted on a trained stock-horse, you pay for discovering the clever tricks which a stockman delights in.

The herd, which is of bulls, has, according to their custom, dispersed as quickly as possible after the chase begins, and are now singly, or at most in twos or threes, seeking safety by the exercise of their stratagem and speed. Between two ridges there runs, for perhaps half a mile, a glade with level grassy bottom. At one end it terminates in a *cul de sac*, and a splendid strawberry bull has been chased towards the mouth of the glade just at the moment when a young farmer, cautiously steering his horse down the rocks at the closed end, has reached the level ground, and is in full gallop towards the opening. Another sportsman is descending sideways into the arena, and perceives his friend's danger.

"In with your spurs, old man," he shouts.

To the best of his means he follows this advice, but the beast is gaining upon him much too surely. Looking over his shoulder, he sees the ferocious eyeballs and frothy muzzle of the bull, and hears his breath-furnace in angry operation. It has been possible to walk by careful steps down the side of this natural barrier; it is another thing to force a partly spent horse up a broken shelf, sloping like a house-roof. Forty yards of turf, barring some providental interposition that will savour of the miraculous, contain the man's chances of life. He knows it, and, still galloping hard, sets his teeth. Then he feels the hind quarters of his horse lifted once, twice, clean off the ground, and—

"Crack! crack!! crack!!!"

The revolver, pointed close to the bull's flank, has, at the third shot, found out a vital part and brought him down. The hunt is over for the present. Men and beasts have had enough; more than enough the horse, which has been gored by the bull underneath its flank, and now shows a streaming wound which, to all outward appearance, must speedily prove fatal. It may, however, be here stated in advance that not only does the animal survive the mishap, but that, after careful doctoring and six months of freedom in the paddock, it is as lively as ever, though it thenceforth goes with a peculiar action which gains for it the sobriquet of "bandy-legs."

This bull is a noted character in these parts, and has been hunted for years. He is known by his peculiar colour, and also by his horns, which are tremendously long, symmetrical, and upturned. The men who skin it subsequently declare they take fourteen bullets from

beneath the hide, the majority from the shoulders and rump, and some of them have doubtless been working their outward passage from flesh to skin for years. He is not a large beast. Like most of his tribe, he is small and wiry, with masses of sinew, and very little beef; but he is of superb proportions, and has a handsome, massive, shaggy head.

After an *al fresco* luncheon outside a bushman's hut, we return home at a funereal pace. The conversation turns upon snakes. The young landlord, who has accompanied us, offers to bet any small sum that we shall see a black snake before we have proceeded a mile further. We turn off the road and ride near the fence, amongst a good deal of dry dead timber. My horse gives a feeble shy, and stops. Sure enough, there is a snake in the grass. The landlord is out of the saddle in a twinkling, and, picking up a stick, aims a blow at the reptile just as it is escaping under the foundation logs of the rude fence. The blow partly disables it, but, as the stick was rotten and flew in pieces at the blow, does not kill it. The young man thereupon seizes the snake by the tail, pulls hard with both hands at the tail end, and dragging it by sheer force from its leverage, hurls it backwards into the dusty road, where it is soon despatched. It is a bit of moral courage which I envy. The snake is five feet long, and one of the most deadly.

CHAPTER V.

COACHING: OLD STYLE.

Last opportunity—The Tasmanian Royal Mail—Coaching in Tasmania—Old friends—Counties and townships—Roadside inns—Antique waiter—The morning star—Descending to Hobart Town.

Books and people have so uniformly recommended me to travel across the renowned convict-made road, by the mail-coach running between Launceston and Hobart Town, that I determine to adopt the recommendation, more especially as it is rumoured that the opportunity may not offer in future years.* I have to miss St. Mary's Pass; the northern coast to Circular Head, remarkable as a natural rocky fortress, five hundred feet high, with a summit of eighty acres; and thereby miss, as I am warned, some of the most effective scenery of Tasmania. But the trout country is at the other end, and I perforce forsake such pictures as a Tasmanian poetess (Mrs. Meredith, author of "My Home in Tasmania") thus describes:—

'Flowers in legions bloomed around in forest, scrub, and marsh,
Dropping soft petals o'er the brook, or on rocky ridges harsh,
Nestling in crevices and chinks, like jewels in the mine,
Or peering out with merry eyes into the noonday shine.

* The Tasmanian Royal Mail performed its last stage in 1877.

There grew the 'helmets' green, like elfin knights together;
Some wore their armour plain, some with a flaunting feather.
And caladenias quaint, with hoods and fringes rare,
Couched by old mossy trees 'midst delicate maiden-hair;
Acres of peaty swamps glowed purple with the shimmer
Of gay rush-lilies; and in dells where the forest-shades fell dimmer—
In deep, green, silent glens,—silent, except the fall
Of tinkling streams that made a monotone most musical—
The feathery fern trees dwelt, with palmy crests outspread,
Close interweaved and overlapp'd in canopies o'erhead;
Upborne on massy columns whence taper ribs upspring,
And leafy traceries flow from their mazy clustering,
While round each pillar, wreaths of polish'd verdure cling
With long and shining fronds, in graceful garlands, drooping
Adown and down, till into the spray of the tiny cascade they're stooping.
But the rill goes wimpling on, round island-rocks all mossy,
By groves of fragrant sassafras, and myrtles dark and glossy,
'Neath bridges of great fallen trunks, under whose dark shadows slipping,
It whirls to the deep and silent pool where the miner-birds are dipping;
And parrots, skimming to and fro thro' a sunny gleam together,
Are bright, as though the sun had set a rainbow in each feather!"

At six o'clock, therefore, on a fine evening I am one of the travellers at the Post Office taking their seats on the outside of the coach. It is a plethoric and imposing equipage, like an overgrown mail-coach of the olden time in England. A few years ago her Majesty's mails in Tasmania were conveyed by a coach not a whit inferior to the smart highflyers and expresses that some of us can remember in association with school holidays, and all the other material that puts gold and silver threads into a boy's life. But although in Tasmania the mail-coach still holds its own, when the march of science has caused its English brethren to be put, like brave old war-ships, out of commission, it is recognized

that a utilitarian age requires a vehicle heavier and more roomy for the purposes of the colony. The present mail-coach, that carries nine passengers inside and fourteen outside, besides a few tons of luggage, accordingly comes upon the scene, although the scarlet-coated coachmen and guards pull a long face as they tell you that the days of the mail-coach, as a Tasmanian institution, are numbered.

It is a very good copy of the home article. Scarlet coats, horn, royal arms, mail-bags, ostlers, horses impatient to be off, loungers finding excitement in our departure, luggage on the roof and in the boot, are all here, and, as I live, the customary verbal sparring by way of farewell between the driver and the fellows holding the leaders' heads. The horses prance and start, swinging round the corners, and clattering over the streets in gallant style, while the shop girls and boys crane their necks—yard measure or sugar-scoop in hand—and the people in the streets pause until the coach is out of sight. It is one of the few excitements the dull times have left to Launceston, and the inhabitants are not so heathenish as to be slack in living up to their privileges.

It is not easy to give, in brief, a description of a coach drive that lasts fourteen or fifteen hours at a stretch, but I do know that I enjoy it because it is a reminder, during the entire distance, of country life at home. Coaching across Tasmania in wet or cold weather—in winter, for example, when snow lies thick on the ground, and the bitter winds battle in your teeth—requires a good deal of sentiment to make it endurable; but it cannot fail to be a treat to a home countryman who has emigrated to, and lived for a time in, the hotter colonies, and who suddenly, in a cool atmosphere, finds home

associations without number reviving within him. Not so long ago I was perspiring in the heat of Queensland and New South Wales; now the air is not only cool—it is keen, and rug, shawl, and overcoat are as much a necessity as a comfort. The sun is setting over the fertile pastoral west, bathing the corn-fields below, and distant mountain sides, with the mellow glow of peaceful evening, as the horses drag their burden up the first hill. There is also the lowing of cattle in our ears, as the urchins take down the bars and release the cows from the milking yards. Veritable ricks of wheat and oats appear here; there, shocks of corn stand in fields where reapers, making most of the waning day, thrust in the homely sickle. True, the labourers are painfully few, sometimes a couple of women and three or four children alone representing the husbandman, but the fields are richly white to the harvest. The gardens, great and small, with their fruit, flowers, and vegetables, almost make me wonder at the effect they produce; yet one need not be ashamed of a little emotion at recognizing old friends after long absence, even though the old friends be inanimate and commonplace.

It is not every one—let me remark parenthetically, and in anticipatory extenuation of future offences—who can understand the emotions of an ardent lover of nature suddenly removed from the flowers, meadows, woods, hedgerows, and streams of home, to a new land where there are few wild-flowers, no meads which an Englishman would call such, no hedgerows, and whose rivers are mostly immense, prosaic, and often unapproachable. Here in Tasmania, which is physically a continuation of Australia, you still have the interminable ranges clothed with eucalypti, but you have the added softer features of home.

At this moment, for example, other old friends are recognized by the roadside, namely, gorse in quantities, and a hedge of sweet-brier on the other side of the way; or an enclosure of apple and pear trees laden with fruit, a row of green peas, a patch of raspberry canes, a battalion of gooseberry, or a detachment of currant bushes. And at the rate of nine miles an hour the Royal Mail speeds over one of the best roads in the world, heeding not that the bright day becomes merged in night, and that the stars in all their southern latitude brilliancy twinkle upon the sleeping world.

The names of most of the halting-places keep up your remembrance of the old country, and suggest many complicated and amusing reflections upon the general subject of nomenclature. The counties' names are more explainable than the townships'. Amongst the eighteen counties into which the island is divided, we have Dorset and Somerset, famed at home for their butter and cheese, and here the one for its grazing capabilities and tin mines, the other for its orchards; Cornwall, famous at home for its mineral produce, and here for its dairy farms, coal, and gold; Devon, the garden of the west at home, and a fair agricultural county here; Buckingham, memorable in English history as having produced, amongst other great men, the patriot John Hampden, and memorable here as the cradle home of salmon and trout; Monmouth, at home the county of rivers and mines, here of lakes and pastoral lands; Kent, here as in England, noted for its timber and fruit; Glamorgan, rich at home in minerals, here in orchards; Cumberland, the romantic at home, and here a vast sheepwalk; Westmoreland, at this end of the world as at the other, with its hills, dales, and lakes; and Lincoln, like its English proto-

type, abounding in marshes, but unlike it, occupying the highest, and probably the wildest, mountain land in the country.

The towns have been christened with a much freer hand. We halt at Perth, Cambeltown, Ross, Oatlands, Melton Mowbray, Bridgewater, and Brighton—names which naturally send fancy roaming over the Highlands and down through the shires to the coast of the English Channel; but we are also made aware of Jericho, Jerusalem, Bagdad, and other townships named after places of far more ancient times.

And the roadside inns? A gentleman who has heretofore wedged me against the guard, elects, after supper at Cambeltown, to get inside out of the cold, leaving me to ponder the inn question over at leisure; and I at length come to the conclusion that they *are* roadside inns—by which is intended the highest praise. At one place an antique waiter, with a strong smack of Somersetshire in his speech, appears in venerable pumps, with a napkin over his arm, and, taking his orders with reverential deference, returns with two horns of amber-coloured beer, innocent of aught save native-grown hops and malt. At another halting-place I look around and say, in an undertone:—

> "The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
> The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,
> The chest contrived a double debt to pay—
> A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day."

And in these small hours of the fresh morning it is in truth a "deserted village" at which we pause, and perhaps in the broad day, too, it stagnates in as woeful a plight as that of which Goldsmith sang so sweetly. But it is wrapped in slumber when the Royal Mail thunders through its one tiny thoroughfare, waking up

the house-dogs, and bringing forth with leaden footsteps the sleepy postmaster to deliver the three or four letters that, portentously sealed up, constitute Her Majesty's sacredly guarded mail-bag.

The walls of every roadside hostelry are adorned, as a matter of honour, with the old-fashioned prints, plain and coloured, which one may find occasionally in rural homes at home, but, alas! for the good old days that we so vainly sigh after, only occasionally. Herring's spirit ought to take flight to Tasmania, if spirits are capable of gratification at honour paid to worthy deeds done in the flesh. The works of his genius are in every inn, enabling the fathers of the hamlet to point their children, to whom England and English scenes are traditions only, to the farmyards and coaching customs and appointments of their ancestry. Hunting scenes, also, are in high favour, and nothing suits the Tasmanian bar-parlour of the country districts better than a fearful steeple-chase, in which broken necks and shattered limbs are the most refreshing incidents of the day's sport.

On the higher country it is unmistakably cold, and I hail the rising sun with all my heart. That hour before dawn is the coldest as well as darkest. The guard of the coach, noticing that I shiver, lends me his 'possum fur-overcoat, and out of its soft folds I observe a most brilliant light shining just over the horizon. It is the morning star. The glorious planet dazzles, and throws a distinct shadow. It blazes like a meteor for a little while, and then sinks below the line of shadow. Daybreak comes with double welcome to people who require warmth and light, and the sun chases off our little troubles with magical celerity.

How, at daybreak, the passengers, if strangers, once

more ascend to their seats outside, to watch the mists roll from the mountains, to wonder at the myriads of rabbits amongst the bracken and furze, to drink in the pure morning air, to be exhilarated by the downward gallop, across the Derwent, towards Hobart Town, and to gaze without tiring at the blooming cottage flower-gardens at Newtown, and thence forth into the very heart of the city, shall not be told in detail. Take it all in all, it is a journey worth enduring once a year in fine weather.

CHAPTER VI.

AT HOBART TOWN.

The Major—Domestic life—Exciting paragraphs—Hobart Town harbour—Mount Wellington—Windy weather—Government House—Brown's River—Mount Nelson—Fishing the Derwent estuary—Port Arthur in decay: a retrospect.

A CERTAIN amount of idling must be undergone at Hobart Town, for a friend whom I have met in Queensland waylays me as the coach thunders along the street, and takes kindly possession of me, bag and baggage. I shall call him the Major, mostly because he looks like one, and speaks as one having authority; and I introduce him into these pages because he is to be my pupil at the river-side, and because he is a representative specimen of the man who makes a fortune in the Colonies. Shrewd, he has turned his hand to many things: has grown cabbages and cucumbers on Victorian gold-fields, and sold them at half-a-crown apiece to the diggers; has been an auctioneer, a farmer, a commercial traveller, a dealer in live and dead meat on a gigantic scale; and is now a squatter and colonial Member of Parliament. Genial, he has got the best education experience of the world can give him; has taken holidays of pleasure and profit in the old country,

in the United States, in China and Japan; and now, in vigorous middle age, is able to rest from his labours, and see his girls and boys grow up, practically ignorant of the hardships which he and his good little wife battled with when they joined their young hands together.

Impatient as I may be to take the field, I cheerfully yield to the blandishments of domestic life, and console myself with as much of the society of the young ladies of the household as I can get, meanwhile acquiring information and laying plans. Exciting paragraphs, some of which are subsequently proved to be altogether fictitious, appear in the island press, giving such lists of the slain that one's breath is at first taken away. But, even after making allowances for exaggerations, it is evident that the rivers up the country are well stocked with fish, and that, given anything like fair play in the matter of weather and condition of water, an ordinary angler should make a good account of them. For a time, however, I enjoy Hobart Town, and content myself with an occasional visit to the museum, where specimens of the trout and salmon caught in the island are embalmed, to strike the sceptics of all ages dumb, and prove to mankind that the mighty effort of acclimatization has succeeded.

And, after all, idling at Hobart Town turns out to be anything but a penance. To a person who has been thoroughly tired out by three voyages and one coach journey, a few days' rest is particularly grateful; and, as the hours and days wear on in a well-ordered home, it is easier and easier to postpone our march upon the streams.

The harbour of Hobart Town is scarcely inferior in beauty to that of Sydney, save that the hills and pro-

montories are not studded with picturesque surburban residences, as in the metropolis of New South Wales. A navy can safely ride in the estuary of the Derwent, and nothing can be finer than its promontories and bays, and stately background of densely wooded hills and mountains. Hobart Town itself, a clean, quiet city, with good streets, solid houses, and well-kept gardens, is magnificently situated, not only because it is built on the edge of this harbour, but because immediately behind rises, keeping unceasing watch and ward over it, the giant of those parts, Mount Wellington. The town reposes humbly, and in perfect confidence, absolutely under its shadow, and the big fellow mixes himself up in all the public and private concerns of the place.

The inhabitants cannot shake him off. Let them journey in what direction they choose, somehow, there is the eye of Mount Wellington upon them. The children, swinging their satchels as they troop to school, look up to see whether the mountain seems good-humoured that morning. The weary watcher, the feeble invalid, the heavy-hearted, seem to find refreshment and solace in gazing upon the wrinkled face, over which the shadows pass, ever changing, though it remains ever the same; for there is in the features of a mountain that which chimes with the humour of all sorts and conditions of men. In the course of a brief hour it puts on a hundred expressions, from the black angry frown that threatens and affrights, to the open, sunny smile of a guileless child.

An untold blessing to a community is a mountain standing in the same relation to it as Mount Wellington does to Hobart Town. It always leads you to look upwards. The sick man rising from his bed after

a long term of languishing disease, is led to the window to behold the familiar object once more; and the sight of the massive mount inspires him. In the burden and heat of the summer day, the labourer rests awhile, and cools himself by contemplating the snow which whitens the tops of the basaltic columns, known far and near as the Organ Pipes.

Indeed, you might almost imagine that the mood of Hobart Town depends not a little upon the mood of the mountain. The Major assures me that the observation will, at any rate, apply to his household. When the summit is swathed in folds of cloud, the children are involuntarily hushed; when the pinnacle is holding all the sunshine it can catch, and flashing it back again, they sing and clap their hands by instinct. One of my lady friends has a rustic summer-house of her own erected on the slope of the lawn, from which she can hold commune with her friend, or sketch him, or tell him her secrets. She declares the mountain talks with her. In moments of weakness it says, "Courage: see how strong I am!" At times, when the spirit is disquieted within, it says, "Peace: behold, nothing disturbs my calm." And in the darkest of hours it whispers, "Wait but a little, and you shall see that there is a silver lining, new from the inexhaustible store of Providence, to every cloud."

Mount Wellington being the lion of Hobart Town, strangers are expected to do it honour. The first questions you are asked are as to your intentions respecting the mountain; the parting guest hears, amongst the soft farewells, anxious inquiries as to what he has done with regard to it.

The mountain, and the town at its base, look doubly well from the deck of a yacht, when, her snowy sails

bellying out, she runs along parallel with Lindisfarne, Rosny, Bedlam Walls (strange name for a spot often used for picnics), and Kangaroo Point. (How many Kangaroo Points are there on the Australasian continent?) In some respects the land views from the centre of Hobart Town harbour are superior to those of Sydney; the mountains loom larger, and the prospects are more varied.

It is windy weather during my stay. It often is windy at Hobart Town. In the early morning it blows hard, and there seems to be unusual disturbance on the mountain, over which certain clouds hover, while the wind howls as it courses down its rugged sides, and speeds, still howling, across to tap unceremoniously at the chamber windows. But it is not the first time that the wind, in an encounter with the sun, comes off second best; and before the family take their seats at the breakfast table the threatened storm has passed beyond the mountain, and taken an excursion to the Southern Ocean.

One of the attractions of Hobart Town is Government House, with the Botanical Gardens adjoining. The residence of his Excellency the Governor is probably first on the list of good-looking Australian governors' houses, resembling—not the new would-be palace of Melbourne, which built it at enormous expense, and now rails at it and pronounces it a mistake; not the much more handsome and seemly edifice overlooking Sydney harbour; not the respectable but prosaic mansion provided for the Governor of Queensland; but rather the country castle of an English nobleman, and, therefore, by far more palatial in reality than mansions of more pretentious dimensions.

The road to Brown's River is one of the drives not

to be omitted by a sojourner in Hobart Town. The English-looking houses and gardens of Sandy Bay come first, showing now a gnarled walnut tree, now a row of lilacs, a laburnum, an oak lusty in its youth but with the veritable heart of oak in it, ash, sycamore, and poplar—all the English trees, in fact, except elm and beech, which grow in the island, but not so plentifully as other forest trees. Then come gardens, where grow a large proportion of the fruits which, when preserved, are luxuries greedily looked for by solitary bushmen, hundreds of miles away in the never-never districts of the colonies, and which might even yet make Tasmania rich, if, in the matter of tariffs, those colonies were not too much governed.

Soon the road rises, winding round the spurs of Mount Nelson, crowned with its signal staff, ordered by Governor Macquarie in the black days when Van Dieman's Land was acquiring an evil reputation—the infant days of the colony to which humble settlers, who have since acquired fortunes, were being then attracted. From different points upon this portion of their drive, we draw up by the roadside, look out upon a wide spread of water, bay, wood, gently sloping beach, and abruptly rising bluff, city, island, and mountain. All too soon, the horses' heads are turned to give, on the homeward drive, the same scenes under different combinations.

Of an evening, just as the sun begins to decline, we pull across to the further shore for an hour's fishing. The ladies sit in the stern sheets with their books, and the rest prepare their lines and dissect the crawfish, which, in these waters, are found to be the best bait that can be procured.

From a sportman's point of view the evening is a

pronounced success. At first the only spoil is the uncanny looking flathead. These, however, from one of those unexplainable causes which so often puzzle the fisherman, suddenly cease biting, and an interval of rock-cod succeeds. Rock-cod are a numerous family; but the Hobart Town specimen is a plump, dark-coloured, slippery, big-headed fellow, averaging a pound in weight, and decided in its movements, as a score of them quickly discover to their cost. The sensation of the evening is a tiger shark, over five feet long, which the Major, after a severe tussle, brings to the top of the water, scaring one lady out of all propriety, causing another to look very determined, as if she is conscious of a necessity to be brave, and prompting the captor, who has a strong objection to showing mercy to anything of a sharkish nature, to take the life of the beast in exchange for the hook buried deep in its maw. A few small bream, miscalled perch, and a white speckled fish, miscalled salmon, complete the collection of four dozen fish.

From a scenic point of view the evening is a still greater success. The boat lies motionless upon the glassy surface of the estuary, and, immediately opposite, Mount Wellington towers above the town, undergoing manifold changes as the light dies away. He seems to be trying robe after robe, to decide which is best for an evening dress. At first the mountain assumes a pearl-grey hue, next a deeper tint, and lastly a gradation of blues, until the rocks and woods become a deep general purple, and the outline stands out as defined as the ridge of a dwelling-house. The stars shine clear, the moon scatters a silver cascade upon the pinnacle, and the home lights in the city twinkle one by one, as the ladies put on their wrappers and the boat shoots across to the etty.

There are historical associations at Hobart Town, but they are gloomy, and connected with the island when it was called Van Diemen's Land, rather than with Tasmania. Periodical excursions are made to Port Arthur, which figures largely in these associations. And a most interesting excursion it is. The execrable doings described with such painfully vivid power by Marcus Clarke in "His Natural Life" are founded upon facts which any man may verify for himself.

When one thinks of the dreadful scenes that have been witnessed here, one wonders that the very stones do not cry out. There is a town in England which it was the custom to say, during the anti-slavery agitation, had been cemented with the blood of slaves. So it might be said that the walls of Port Arthur were raised with the blood of convicts; for, though no such horrors have been known at Port Arthur as at the former settlement, the evil heritage of the iron hand descended from Macquarie Harbour. The history of the convict settlement in Van Diemen's Land is a dreadful one, but it is a history that can never be repeated.

Port Arthur is doomed, however.* It is doomed by the authorities. In a little while the penal establishment will be abolished. There are sixty convicts there at present, but they are all to be removed to the prison at Hobart Town, and the cost of the establishment, including the schooner necessary for the conveyance of stores and communication generally with the mainland, is very great. But it is doomed still more by the genius of decay, which has laid its insidious grip upon turret and foundation-stone alike. The stronghold, maintained by guard-house and soldiery, will crumble

* Port Arthur, like the mail-coach, was disestablished in 1877.

to pieces. It is crumbling to pieces. You shall see nothing which embodies the spirit of desolation so much as Port Arthur.

In a row of solitary cells, some distance removed from the main prison establishment, we find a weather-beaten door of one of the dungeons that can be with difficulty pushed open. At length it falls back, and upon the floor we see the bones of three sheep, which in some, for them, ill-fated moment, perhaps during a tempest, sought sanctuary here. By some strange means the door swung suddenly on its rusty hinges and enclosed the poor animals, like the heroine of the "Misletoe Bough," in their living tomb.

Port Arthur, twenty years ago, when Tasman's Peninsula was effectually cut off from the rest of the world by Eagle Hawk's Neck, a well-guarded strip of land about fifty yards wide, was the scene of busy life. Not only the prisons, but the barracks and the station buildings were filled; the sounds of compulsory labour mingled with the clanking of fetters; and Port Arthur most rigorously carried out the purpose for which it was established, by punishing, with a mercilessness that has been exposed and prohibited, the criminals sent thither to work out their doom.

There is a small island in connection with Port Arthur, called Dead Island, because it was the cemetery of the penal establishment, and our guides tell us that there are two thousand graves filled by wretches who passed into them not only

"Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung,"

but unnamed. The ignominy of their life pursued them after death. Yet the grave gave them what justice, tempered with the little mercy possible in the

convict system of the past, refused them. It gave them rest; it gave them release from harsh word and brutal blow; it gave the prisoner freedom. Upon that island there is a convict still living: a man among the tombs. They say he is refractory; probably he is. They say every method has been tried to reform him, but that he has the ferocious nature of the wild beast. So they give him a hut on Dead Island, feeling certain that, prone as he is to quarrel, he will find a difficulty in quarrelling with the dead.

In its palmy days Port Arthur must have been—apart from its associations—a lovely spot. There was no lack of labour to take full advantage of the wonderful natural fertility of the land. Skilled mechanics were amongst the convicts, men with criminal instincts and artistic tastes. Time never pressed. Sentences in those days rarely erred on the side of brevity. Towers, wharves, terraces, pleasure grounds, were formed; fountains played, statuary graced the scene. Dilapidation now reigns over all; weeds and black snakes overrun the place. In a state of culture, the gardens must have been beautiful, and the peninsula itself is not without its charms of natural scenery.

Some of the buildings at present in use are well kept, and the old military forms are strictly kept up. The convicts sentenced to penal labour for life are clad in yellow; the prisoners sentenced to over eight years are distinguished by a yellow and black dress; the next grade wear a costume particoloured from head to foot, half yellow and half grey; short-sentence men are known by their sober grey dress.

It oppresses you into silence to inspect the ruins of workshops, sawmill, tannery, and foundry, and to know that the walls and windows of the houses and the

fences of the gardens are tumbling to pieces. I cannot enter into many questions discussed during my visit; but if one-half of what was said in my hearing be true, Port Arthur will not crumble to hopeless decay a moment too soon.

We see the prisoners in masks marching into the yard; we decline, however, to go through the model prison, or go to the neck to see the stakes to which blood-hounds, trained to hunt down escaped convicts, used to be chained; we see rusty fetters and fearful leg-irons. It strikes you that some of the people are rusty too. At a little guard-house inhabited by one constable, in whose charge exit from, or entrance to, the peninsula is supposed to rest, one of the gentlemen of our party notices a revolver suspended against the wall, and elicits the fact that it has not been touched for eleven months. The man seems as rusty as his weapon. A couple of men go off to fish, and the boat is pulled by a couple of convicts. But a warder sits in the bows of the boat with a loaded revolver at hand, and there is a second warder, also armed, at the other end.

A man with whom we converse tells us that in the western part of the peninsula there are many deer running wild, and that great havoc is committed amongst the cottage gardens by them.

The day may be bright, the flowers may blow, and the birds sing, but you will take leave of Port Arthur in decay with the remark that it is a gloomy place, gloomy in its present desolation, gloomy by the memories of bygone days.

CHAPTER VII.

OVER THE MOUNTAINS.

Two recommendations—A reported arrival—The cucumber mullet—A grand coach ride—"The harvest of a quiet eye"—Seventeen hundred feet above sea-level—Half-way house—"Pretty miserable, thank you"—A prostrate monarch—The Huon district—Venator and Piscator—The river Huon.

A LITTLE tidal fishing at Kingston, and at Risdon, where a Government convict farm was once established; an hour or so amongst the trout in a brook tumbling down a picturesque glen from Mount Wellington into a brewery reservoir; lingering over the wonderful panoramas which reward the ascent of Mounts Wellington and Nelson; rides and walks in the Domain, make the time pass lightly.

At the Major's recommendation, we devote our two final days at Hobart Town to the Huon river. He advances two grounds of recommendation. Just as there are thousands of persons born and bred in London who have never visited the Tower or the Houses of Parliament, he says, there are plenty of Hobartonians who know nothing of the finest piece of scenery within their reach, namely, the drive to the Huon river. Plea number two is that a gentleman, recently arrived from the Huon, has reported the arrival, after some years'

absence, of the little fish known in Tasmania as the herring, or cucumber mullet. This, of itself, would have been a sufficient reason, as I am very eager to make the acquaintance of this fish.

The cucumber mullet, about ten years ago, literally swarmed in the Tasmanian streams. Never exceeding a pound in weight, and rarely half a pound, its numbers were so great that anglers have been able to take their two and twenty dozen in the course of a day; and the fish had the great additional merit of rising to an artificial fly, and possessing certain gamesome qualities dear to every true-hearted angler. Suddenly evil overtook these cucumber-scented fish. They were seen to come down the rivers in endless procession, grievously diseased, or injured; at any rate dying and dead. Some said a horde of cormorants had devastated the rivers; others attributed the mysterious and wholesale mortality among the "herring" to the introduction of trout and salmon. Be the cause what it might, it nevertheless was an unfortunate truth that the fish disappeared simultaneously from the rivers, and anglers, in lieu of their dozens, could not find so much as an individual fish. But, as has been stated, reports were now prevalent that the long-lost favourite was coming back again as mysteriously as it had departed, and that it had been seen and actually taken at the first falls on the Huon river.

The coach ride from Hobart Town to the Huon river is the finest thing of its kind I have experienced. I doubt whether Tasmania has anything to show more romantic. The island has an abundance, some would say more than an abundance, of bold mountain scenery—that is to say, mountain scenery in which lofty peaks and abrupt bare bluffs take their part with the more

monotonous gum-tree ranges which the island has in common with the continent of Australia; but it has only one Huon river drive.

We mount the box seat of the coach on a fine January morning, which, summer prime though it is, is yet cold enough to warrant the putting on of an overcoat. There is just a *soupçon* of frost in the air, and the most distant objects, when the sun has chased away the morning rime, come out marvellously distinct.

The course lies over one of the spurs of Mount Wellington. *Toujours* the mountain. The basaltic columns, to which reference has in a previous chapter been made as the Organ Pipes, seem only yards instead of three or four miles distant, and the gum-tree stems near them, very white in the sunlight from the point of view presented by the top of the coach, look like organ pipes too, only smaller and more regularly placed than the perpendicular rocks which dominate them.

The coach, leaving the town, travels up the road directly overlooking the range, and gives a fine panoramic view of the valley, with its old prison buildings, modern brewery, and private residences, its patches of green cultivation advancing up the side of the mountain, and its blooming gardens now green and sober in that respectable period which marks the pause between the joyous holiday of blossoming springtime and the responsible duties of fruit-yielding autumn. Strawberry gardens, ten or fifteen acres in extent, their work done for this year at least, occupy the sunny side of the hill, along with the orchards, heavy with rapidly maturing fruit. Up still higher, the scene changes from cultivated enclosures to bush, bracken, and heaths growing by the wayside. The

yellow clusters of the native hemlock, as it is termed impart gaiety to the entire picture. Colour of any kind is grateful amongst the varying greens of full foliage, but there is nothing to equal a rich yellow for general effect. The blue of the cornflower and the scarlet of the poppy receive half their prestige from the golden corn amongst which they grow.

The roadside is deeply fringed with these bright masses of yellow, and behind them are numerous flowering shrubs, such as the tea tree, native lilac, and many another that varies the colour and softly scents the atmosphere, which becomes more and more exhilarating as the ascent is made. In an hour we have climbed twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea. At that altitude there is a little garden attached to the police station, where peas and potatoes are blossoming side by side, and a patch of oats dancing to the breeze. Standing at a gate which opens into a mountain track, is an old man resting a bundle of newly gathered heath upon the topmost bar. There he stands, the very type of an English villager. In his costume, in his attitude, in his vacant stare as we pass, we have the true English villager reproduced, just as he would appear descending from the Sussex downs with materials for his brooms.

There is a good deal in Tasmania to remind us of home. The farmers drive to market in that famous test of respectability, a gig, and not in a cart or buggy; the equestrians assume a staid jog-trot, whereas an Australian would be galloping up and down hill with a wild whoop, and arms and legs all in motion. In many respects Tasmania is a faithful copy of England, even to the extent of its prejudices and faults, but there is one feature that resembles Ireland rather than Eng-

land, namely, the general air of dilapidation in the rural buildings.

In a short time the aforementioned yellow masses begin to mingle with fern growths, and the gullies deep down on the left hand begin to challenge as much attention as the corresponding heights to the right. The road becomes more and more enclosed with trees; peeps of far-away sea and promontory flash through them. The trees increase in size; the varieties of shrub life multiply. The native willow, graceful, though little like its namesake, and the native musk, whose leaves when they shiver display a good deal of silver underclothing, are amongst the crowd of roadside objects.

From a seat behind, a musical voice reads out from a guide-book an enthusiastic description of what may be seen in this part of the road:—

"In the spring the clematis often enfolds old trees as with a bridal robe of snowy flowers."

The clematis, as it appears to us, does not, however, seem to have confined its attention to any particular form of tree. It has overrun old and young alike, and if the blossoms have declined, the witnesses of their presence remain in the silky brown remnants which cling on long after other dead blossoms and leaves have perished. Faithfully in Tasmania, as in England, the clematis deserves the name of "traveller's joy."

But let us listen to the damsel behind, as she continues her quotation from the guide-book:—

"The comesperma clusters and tangles over the brake ferns, looking at a distance as though a mantle of azure silk had been dropped upon them; pyramidal daisy trees gleam forth in a constellation of stars, the yellow godenia, the ever-lovely tea tree, epacridæ——"

"Which is the 'packready,' I wonder?" asks the uncle or father to whom the girl is reading out the botanical technicology.

"They ain't like the nice names we used to call 'em in 'Ampshire," says the aunt or mother of the same damsel. "Love-lies-bleeding, sweet-william, cowslip, heart's-ease. Ah! that's how to christen flowers."

"Epacridæ of every tint from white to crimson," the girl continues, "pimeleas, correas, and countless other flowering shrubs fringe the path by turns; whilst ferns, mosses, and lichens of wondrous beauty lurk in every dim green dell to delight the explorer."

To be sure, we, the coach passengers, have no opportunity of exploring, except with the eye, and the objects of beauty are so manifold that exploration is unnecessary. Without any trouble, here is the spot for what Wordsworth, in one of his happy phrases, terms—

"The harvest of a quiet eye."

The eucalypti rise in unusually magnificent proportions; nearer earth there are such minor trees as the elegant sassafras, with its bright glossy foliage and pyramidical shape, occasional creepers, the indigo-powdered tops of the handsome blue-gum saplings, wide-spreading bracken, and underneath all a velvet pile of mossy verdure. As you proceed, you look far down into ravines radiant with superb ferns, from the trembling little maiden-hair to the fully developed tree fern, rising proudly twenty feet out of the soil before it deigns to spread out its wondrous plumes. Perhaps, in close proxmity, a thicket of sweet-brier attests its claims in the universal call for admiration.

From a height of fourteen hundred feet the sunshine can be seen mottling, as the scudding clouds permit

it, the lowlands, while the bleak wind whistles from the mountain, with whom we are now rubbing shoulders. The passing glimpse obtained of the Bower—popular haunt of picnic-parties—is of a fern paradise; but the coach sweeps round a sudden turn, revealing, still deeper and deeper down from the very edge of the road, glens full of ferns, and still steeper and steeper up from the other edge, the mountain side, grand with the grandeur of fine forest trees, around the big trunks of which the smaller and tenderer growths lovingly cluster.

For a moment you seem to be galloping direct into a perpendicular wall of hoary granite, silvered with trickling threads of water dripping from the higher altitudes. Here are fantastic groups of mossy rocks echoing the tumble of a distant cascade. Once again a sweep in the road opens out to the left the far-off glitter of the ocean, or the dim outline of island and promontory, to be quickly followed by ravines, some in miniature, others sinking two hundred feet beneath, but, both small and great, one living mass of yellow blossom, feathery fern, and flowering shrub.

"This is the highest point of the ocean, gentlemen," the coachman—a capital whip and an intelligent commentator upon the scenery—announces. "We are seventeen hundred feet above the sea."

Here we pause to breathe the horses, and watch a couple of fowls picking up unconsidered trifles under a great fuchsia tree near which a number of Scotch thistles maintain sturdy foothold. Then, with powerful double break promptly applied, we commence a rapid descent of some twelve hundred feet in four miles. New scenes come with a warmer atmosphere. A mountain stream brawls down a valley hidden by the

tangle of bush and brier. The diligent settler's handiwork is stamped in partial clearings. In the midst of a field of corn behold a patch of raspberry canes flourishing in the swampy soil, or English fruit trees covering ground out of which the patriarchal Huon pine has been grubbed.

At a half-way house the passengers descend to refresh themselves on fresh bread and butter and innocent tea, with the sauce *piquante* the journey over the mountain had furnished. What a pleasing surprise, after the tree ferns and forest associations, to pause unexpectedly in a cottage garden where, as we munch our frugal fare, we enumerate, in the most vigorous state of health, foxglove, mullein, laburnum, cranebill, daisy, dahlia, arum and tiger-lily, pinks, carnations, marsh-mallows (one fellow a tree over six feet high), lilac, stinging nettle, hollyhock, gladiolus, rose, thyme, violets, coreopsis, primrose, Canterbury bell, and St. John's wort, the garden being fenced with a hedge of hawthorn, and the usual fruit trees growing in the rear of the house. While we make the enumeration the ponderous crash of a falling tree overpowers for a moment the music of the trout stream, and a sudden gust soughs down the valley, the requiem of another fallen denizen of the forest.

Life hereabouts is probably lonely. A young woman leans against the doorpost of a rude cottage of slabs covered with roof of bark. The owner married her a week ago, and brought her here from the suburbs of the town. The coachman nods as the horses trot by.

"Good morning. How are you, ma'am?" he inquires.

"Oh, pretty miserable, thank you," she answers.

Nearing the Huon district, a monarch of the woods, a swamp gum, is noticed prostrate in a ravine. It has

fallen athwart a particularly fine collection of tree ferns. At the time the wreck must have been immense. The ferns, however, have evidently forgotten and forgiven, for they are now advancing blithely over the ruin, as if they had read the legend of the "Babes in the Wood," and were desirous of emulating the friendly robin, but wished to cover the unfortunate with living instead of dead leaves.

The coach pelts down the last hill, and bowls along the sandy level, at the end of which, in welcome cosiness, appears the handful of houses composing the little village of Victoria, and the snug hostelry well known to picnic parties and absentees from the city beyond the mountain, patronized for many a year by newly married couples from the southern end of the island, and appreciated by tourists bent upon exploring the hamlets, islets, heights, timber resources, sawmills, ship-building yards, and jam manufactories of the—by comparison with the normal sleepiness of most of the other parts of Tasmania—busy Huon district.

Before the terminal is reached I venture to remark, "Do you know, I have been wondering how some of the lordly members of our West End coaching clubs would get over such a journey as we have had this morning. The four-in-hand show, on the opening day of the season, is very brave in Hyde Park, I admit, and the liveries of the two dapper grooms, ready to hop down from the rear and rush to the leaders' heads at any moment, are eminently fashionable at Lords' or Ascot. But I can hardly fancy the highly mettled bays with black points galloping down this Huon road, with its declivities and sharp bends, until they heel over like steeds coursing round the ring of a circus."

"Oh, it's nothing when you are used to it," the

Major answers, and the reply is not inapt, coming as it does from a man used to the coachmanship of Cobb and Co.'s masterly Australian whips.

"You'll come with me a-fishing?" I inquire.

"Not this afternoon, I think," he says. "I feel more moved to seek some woodland shade and finish the 'Pilgrim and the Shrine.'"

"You shall do nothing of the sort," I rejoin. "To-day you commence your pupilship to me, in the character of Mr. Venator, and I forbid mooning under hedgerows or shrubberies. Here is the end of our journey; here is a twelve-foot fly-rod that last did service on Dartmoor; and here's a hand, my trusty friend, able and willing to wield it."

"The man who putteth on harness should leave boasting to him who taketh it off," the Major answers. "Wait till you saunter home in the gloaming before you sound the timbrel. Ah! Yonder is the Huon, like 'Iser, rolling rapidly.'"

"Prophetic soul!" I respond, in mock heroics,

> "'Few fish shall part where many meet;
> This creel contains their winding-sheet.
> Both trout and mullet, eating sweet,
> Shall find a worthy sepulchre.'"

"Be merciful," answers the Major. "If you are to be Piscator, out of respect to the immortal Izaak, I pray you, in the words of another eminent personage, 'behave as sich.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST AND SECOND LESSONS.

The angler enthusiast—A fair understanding—Up stream—A boatman's habit—The "Rapids"—Retreat ordered—A serious drawback—A palpable hit—End of first lessons—The mountain stream—Try again—The Major's conversion—A delicious experience—A golden shallow—A well-tried cast—Landing double—End of second lessons—*Thymallus Australis.*

THE angler, like all sportsmen, in the heyday of his enthusiasm, regards his sport for the time being as the be-all of his existence. To the mere looker-on who, not sympathizing with, does not understand him, he is a sort of amiable lunatic, or, at the lowest computation, a person going about the world with a bee in his bonnet. Later in life he will proceed more leisurely, having learnt the prudence of tempering his zeal with philosophy. He will then be more careful not to tempt the inconveniences of wet clothes and damp feet, and will always find time to eat and drink at proper times. At this period I have not graduated far enough to rank with the latter, and can scarcely spare ten minutes for dinner or luncheon.

"We may as well start upon a fair understanding," remarks the Major, sitting at the table, and waiting for the willing but not too smart little Abigail to bring

in the cheese and salad, while I have pushed back my chair and am preparing my tackle. "Let us do things decently and in order. I humbly submit that in fourteen minutes by the clock no right-minded man can do justice—in a village tavern—to three courses."

To which rebuke I must needs say, "I sit corrected, my pupil, and apologize for my selfishness. I fear me it is a way we have in our order, and I henceforth empower you to pull me up when tripping."

"Say no more, venerable master; pull you up I assuredly will, and that with a round turn, too, as often as necessary."

And the pupil has the courage of his opinions, for he eats his cheese to the last crumb, and drains his ale to the last drop, before he rises from the table, and even then leisurely picks his teeth in front of a wonderful picture of Abraham, the Old Testament Sheik, who, with a terrific knife between his teeth—butchen-wise—appears hoisting a lanky sprawling youth, supposed to be his son Isaac, upon a sacrificial pile which bears a close resemblance to a chest of drawers, as that useful article of furniture would appear from behind.

Then the master and pupil take boat and depart up stream. The Huon is a noble river at this portion of its career, being broad, deep, and dark now that it nears the ocean tide. Its cultivated banks lend it a testimonial of staidness and importance, and it generally comports itself as if conscious of the business purposes to which, from the bridge downwards, it is applied.

The boatman, questioned, is profuse in his promises of sport at the "Rapids." "Trout? Oh yes, plenty of trout; in fact, all sorts of fish."

"This looks well," says the Major.

"Ah," I reply, "receive as a preliminary item of instruction the advice never to believe a boatman, or a keeper, until you know him, or, rather, until he knows you. It is his business—so, in his shortsightedness, he conceives—to lay on colour."

Our Huon boatman evidently by nature inherits the traditions of his calling. Here, on the confines of the Antarctic circle, is a youth, colonial born and bred, following the manners and customs of the Thames fishermen, never reflecting that out of his own mouth he will be, sooner or later, condemned. In his case it is sooner. Quietly cross-examined, he is forced to state that, of his own knowledge, he can afford no data whatever as to the chances of sport in the Huon. Trout? Well, he has heard that somebody had said that somebody has been told that somebody else has caught one. That is the sum total, at last, of his knowledge.

After a long pull, and a strong pull, against a heavy stream, swollen, it soon becomes apparent, to a deep porter colour, and, worst of all for the angler, still swelling, the "Rapids," as they are grandiloquently termed, are pointed out ahead. There are an islet and surrounding shallows in the middle, and the extra ripples, with a fall of a few inches, are the "Rapids," to which all visitors are taken. Very pretty, doubtless, the Huon scenery is at this point; and as motion is life, and life is generally welcome, these little falls are not permitted to be lightly considered. The practised eye to-day, however, at once sees that angling, under the circumstances, would be a simple waste of time, and a retreat is ordered.

Gliding swiftly with the current back towards the village, one sits in the bows on the look out for snags,

and Piscator, casting right and left, improves the occasion by imparting to his friend a series of learned instructions in the art of throwing a fly. The boatman by-and-by contrives to remember that there is a mountain stream near Victoria, and that this is always in fishable condition. At its mouth we are accordingly landed in the cool evening, and the little tributary truly is in excellent order, neither too high nor too low, neither too bright nor too coloured.

Of it, and indeed of all the Tasmanian mountain streams, it may be said it is the very picture of a trout river. Without delay, I devote myself to a conscientious attack upon it, delighted that the old fly-rod has not lost its supple temper, nor the hand its cunning. Amidst so much, however, that is favourable, there is one drawback of a somewhat serious nature: not a fish is to be seen; we both most carefully look for the tokens which an experienced angler expects, peer into every deep and shallow, and agree that never a sign of trout life has been manifest. So much we tell each other, sitting upon the fence of a verdant hop-field, to which we have worked our way.

"'Few fish shall part where many meet——'

How ran the measure, worshipful sir?" the waggish Major inquires.

"Another palpable hit," I confess; "and, after all, we shall saunter home in the gloaming with an empty creel, but, mark you, neither dispirited nor disappointed. Know further, that angling is one of the most precarious of all amusements. In the stubble or coppice, in the fens or on the moors, there are certain fixed laws upon which to base reasonable anticipations. In angling the fixed laws are few, and you are to a great

extent working in the dark. You can speak with tolerable certainty of the haunts and habits of feathered and four-footed game; of fish we know comparatively little, and further——"

"I am sorry to interrupt your practical lecture, but, to descend for a moment from generalities to particulars, do you suppose there are any trout in this stream?" asks my comrade, intensely practical all in a moment.

"If, as the boatman said, trout were put into the water, I dare say there are. I have seen streams at home, like this to-day, in which you could scarcely believe it possible a fish could be, so absent was all appearance of finny life. Yet, in an hour, the water would be alive with trout, suddenly hurrying from their hiding-places under bank or stone, in obedience to some powerful, but to us mysterious law," I inform him, Johnsonianly.

"Well, well; I have taken some lessons to-day," he observes as we walk back to the inn; "and not the least is the lesson that the gentle art involves the virtue of patience."

"I find thee apt, most amiable learner, and if thou hast verily learnt so much, our blank day on the Huon has not been misspent. See, the lights of our hotel glimmer afar through the gorse, like glow-worms, and one could almost fancy that the odours of the kitchen have been wafted down the road to hasten our footsteps."

"So, so; but how did you say ran the measure, worshipful sir?" he asks, slyly.

"How?" is the response. "Thus:—

> 'No fish shall part where none e'er meet;
> Unused remains the winding-sheet;
> But trout and mullet would be sweet
> To thee, O scoffing epicure.'"

"You gave me wholesome advice just now. Take counsel in exchange. Don't perpetrate parody or pun; the pastime is cheap and easy, but it is not respectable —for a newspaper man."

"My dear scholar, don't be a prig; or you'll spoil my appetite for that superb dish of chops smoking hot on our table."

With which end the first lessons.

We are up blithely before the sun, and I signify to my pupil approval of the ready response he had paid to

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn."

Pleasantly discoursing, as men with light hearts, good constitutions, and active minds love to do, we wend our way once more to the banks of the mountain stream, and take our stand near the hop-field fence from which the teacher delivered his lecture on the previous evening. A soft wind blows across the river. I search my book for a brown fly, and the Major, to whom the rod has been entrusted, tries a cast, to while away the time. It seems the simplest thing possible when the expert, apparently without an effort, sweeps the limber rod over the right shoulder, describes a horse-shoe curve, and then, bringing it forward with a graceful movement, delivers the flies straight and light upon the water. But the result of the learner's attempt is the unseemly splashing of a curiously entangled mass of flies, cast, and line into the stream.

"Try again," he is encouraged, "and take it coolly; let the rod and the wind do the business for you."

Trying again, the learner succeeds in sending the flies, a little clumsily, as may be expected, but without mishap or hindrance, into space, the dropper pitching upon a log and rolling quietly thence into the sharp stream, escaping from its butt.

"What is this?" he asks; "I am fastened to a log."

"Give him line. It is a trout!" shouted I. "Keep up the point of your rod. Winch in. Let him go. Bring him away from the stump," etc., etc.

Some readers, at least, will understand the history of this trifling accident, and will be rejoiced to know that the learner, keeping himself tolerably cool, eventually brings his prize to the landing net, and has the felicity of gazing upon a beautifully speckled, *bonâ fide* brown trout, gasping and struggling among the grass.

From this moment the Major is an ardent angler. The accident of a favourable breeze and convenient log has given the tyro an advantage which could not have been surpassed by the most masterly skill. Had the fly first touched water, the inevitable splash of a roughly thrown line would have scared away every fish in the neighbourhood. Kindly fortune, however, bore it to the log, at the end of which master trout was poising his comely form, keeping a sharp look-out for odds and ends of provender floating down, to be drawn, as it knew right well they must be, into the very centre of the stream in which it had taken up position. The small Coachman fly, sliding gently off the log, was as like as life to what must have occurred if a moth or beetle, treating itself to an early ramble, had rested for a few moments upon the partially submerged tree trunk, accidentally missed its footing, and been hurried to a watery grave. His troutship, whose hungry eye had beheld the situation of affairs, had no doubt metaphorically put his finger to the side of his nose, and, at the proper moment, pounced like lightning upon the drowning insect from round the corner. It was a bitter deception, of course, and the trout had

speedy reason to feel that the deception, like a bashfully told falsehood, stuck in his throat.

So far as the Major is concerned, the triumph, as we have seen, is purely accidental. Many of the crises which influence our lives are of that category. I repeat, then, that from this moment my friend develops into one of the most ardent of anglers. For the rest of his days he blesses the memory of that one-pound trout: it introduces him to a new sensation; it kindles a flame which no amount of subsequent failure can dim; it inspires him with ambition; it gives him something new to live for. This, however, in the familiar phraseology of the novels of our youth, is to anticipate.

The excitement of the playing and landing of the trout having moderated, the successful man undergoes the usual reaction, becoming tremulous and pale. No angler is worthy of the name who has not passed through this delicious experience. It does not recur often, and even if you are a bishop or a chief justice you need not be ashamed to discover that there is so much child's heart left within the man.

To the instructor and witness of this exploit the unexpected incident is full of rich promise, though he is too experienced not to know that these triumphant beginnings are often as delusive as—let us say—a ministerial promise. Nevertheless he whips every available inch of the water, and whips it —though he has to say it of himself—artistically; but, alas! without a ghost of success. The lucky man refreshes himself every ten minutes by opening the basket to admire the captured trout, pluming himself meanwhile upon the circumstance that he, the novice, has achieved what the veteran, the master, could not, by virtue of

all his art, accomplish. Not to weary the reader with further amplification of this small episode, it may be at once stated that no other trout is taken to keep the solitary inhabitant of the creel in countenance. It reposes upon the couch of bracken, lovingly prepared by its fell destroyer, and is left in solitude to depart the world in as much peace of mind as the memory of its cannibalism and natural ferocity will allow it.

"It is very strange that there is—that you cannot find another fish," the Major ventures to say.

"No, it is not strange," he is answered; "the stream is very poorly stocked in this locality, any fish there may be having, following the bent of their instinct, worked their way up into the mountain tumbles and eddies. This was probably a fellow who took lodgings under that log, and held to them after his friends had migrated. I am right glad, however, that it fell to your share. Always bear in mind that the true angler enjoys the luck of another as much as his own. Be not, nevertheless, puffed up, nor build upon so slight a foundation a castle that will melt in air. You may make numerous essays before you repeat your good fortune."

"What you mean, I presume, is that the race is not always to the swift?"

"That is what I do mean. A cowboy with whip-cord and crooked pin often distances the expert furnished with the most costly and delicate appliances. Hold! Do you see that shelving shallow of golden sand at the termination of yonder swirl of sparkling water?"

"I do; and I see a fish—two, in point of fact."

"There are three. Keep behind that tea tree. These must be the long-looked-for cucumber mullet, or fresh-water herring."

And, on my mettle, I try my best to secure one of the unsuspecting trio. I kneel humbly down in the grass out of sight, and proceed warily, knowing that with the sun now high in the heavens, and water clear as crystal, the utmost caution is necessary. The flies, purchased in Hobart Town, are exchanged for a cast of superlative composition.

"The cucumber mullet," I explain, "I have long suspected to be a grayling, and this cast was made for me by a water bailiff on the Wharfe in Yorkshire. You will observe it is of horsehair, tapering down from four twisted strands to a single hair."

"Why horsehair?"

"The spring is more elastic than with gut. These are Yorkshire grayling flies, moreover, small and light as a mosquito."

The tiny lures fall imperceptibly upon the stream, a yard above the shallow upon which the trio of fish disport. The largest of the three turns at the fly as it floats past, but thinks better of it, and returns to its position.

"All right," whispers the operator. "We shall be too many for him next time."

An interval of five minutes is allowed to pass without further attempt. At the expiration of that period forth goes the cast as before. The angler's prediction is verified. A circle in the water, and, simultaneously, a quick, light turn of the wrist is enough; two silvery fish are struggling to escape the hooks. Up into the deep eddy, across toward the fallen tree, here, there, and everywhere they run, until, exhausted, they turn over on their sides, and surrender at discretion. They have, in their ignorance of the maxim that union is strength, materially assisted towards each other's de-

struction. The proceedings of the angler have enlisted the spectator's rapt attention. Precept is now illustrated by example; and there is added to the other lessons this—that in angling, as in many affairs where men and women are concerned, it is best to give your quarry plenty of line, never, however, permitting it to become slack, but allowing your enemies or victims to compass their own defeat.

"Be careful with the landing net," is said to the Major, who is officiating with that necessary implement.

The warning comes too late. Perhaps it is scarcely fair to expect a totally inexperienced assistant to begin at once by overcoming the very difficult operation of landing two fish on the same line in a sharply running stream. Good anglers oftener fail than succeed in this dilemma, and my assistant's well-meant exertions end in his striking one of the fish from its hold, albeit he manages to secure the other.

"You should have netted the bottom fish first," I tell him; "and for the future sink your net under the fish, and do not thrust at him with it."

"Thanks; I won't forget," meekly answers the pupil.

It is, as I supposed, a grayling, to all intents and purposes. It smells like cucumber; its back, tail, and fins are purplish in hue; there are the bronze tints underneath; but the eye is less lozenge-shaped, and the general form is less elegant than that of our old friend *Salmo thymallus*.

Thus end the second lessons; and, on the whole, well pleased with our very moderate sport, we walk back to breakfast, and to the return coach. The scenery during the first half of the homeward journey is the least interesting, and the instructor finds in the instructed an attentive audience to his reminiscences

of days amongst the grayling on Teme, Lugg, Wharfe, Itchen, and Test in the old country.

Months after this excursion I stumble across an old number of the *Australasian*, from which it appears that the cucumber mullet of Tasmania is known in Victoria (where, however, it has of late unaccountably declined) as *Thymallus Australis*, and the following remarks are made respecting it:—"The Australian grayling is almost identical with the English fish in character, in habits, and in the manner of its capture, and anyone who has been a grayling fisher at home will be at no loss to fill a basket here. In shape there is some difference between the two fish; the local grayling being smaller, of a more uniform thickness from head to tail, and with a less prominent back-fin. But it possesses very strongly the peculiar generic odour. A newly caught basket of grayling might pass in smell for a plate of fresh-sliced cucumber. The Australian grayling has a very wide distribution throughout the southern half of this continent, and is found also in great plenty in most of the Tasmanian rivers. In Victoria, it is most commonly taken in the Yarra, but is believed to inhabit all our running fresh-water rivers along the coast, from the Glenelg to the Snowy. The fact of this wide distribution is interesting to our acclimatizers, as indicating the fitness of our rivers to receive other members of the salmon family. Where the grayling lives it is tolerably certain that the trout will live too; for the food which maintains the one is precisely that which is required by the other. At present the grayling is the only fish which offers any sport to the fly-fisher, and as such deserves a high place in the estimation of the true angler. It is true that it rarely exceeds

a pound in weight, and that it is somewhat capricious in its humours, preferring sometimes the coarse red worm at the end of a string and a stick to the most beautiful fly from Bellyard. But whilst in the mood for biting in the shallows, I know no sport prettier in its kind than whipping for these dainty little fish in the Yarra."

Professor McCoy, an accepted colonial authority, writes on the same fish: "The Yarra Yarra, and some other of the rivers of the southern coast, contain in great abundance a beautiful and active fish, excellent for the table, and affording capital sport to the angler. By ichthyologists following the classification of Cuvier, it would be referred to the *Salmonidæ*, the adipose second dorsal fin being well marked; and so much does it resemble the grayling, in the cucumber smell when caught, in general appearance, habits, mode of rising to the fly and playing, as well as in flavour, that anglers are in the habit of calling it now the Australian grayling. Its close resemblance in food and habits to the true *Salmonidæ* helped the Acclimatization Society to argue that certain of our rivers would serve for the experiment of acclimatizing the European salmon and trout, and, as experience has since shown, successfully. It is vulgarly also called the 'Yarra herring,' and is the *Prototroctes maræna*."

CHAPTER IX.

"SEND HIM TO AUSTRALIA."

Blustering gale—The New Norfolk steamer—The Upper Derwent—A ne'er-do-well—Foolish parents and guardians—Master H. G.'s story—Dining not in his line—Moral for emigrants.

TASMANIA is declared by all authorities to possess a very fine climate; some go so far as to say the finest temperate climate in the world. But it is liable to occasional changes, and just at the time when we start to explore the Derwent district a bleak wind, said to be unprecedented for that period of the year, makes the weather positively cold. A bitter gale blusters up the river, and the watery gleams of sunshine are interspersed with driving showers of hail and rain.

The New Norfolk steamer, if not a model of modern naval architecture, is probably quite good enough for the business in which it is engaged, and sufficiently comfortable for a river voyage which does not exceed four hours, and which is usually undertaken by persons anxious to be on deck as much as possible. And it always aims at punctuality. In this world, however, full as it is of uncertainties, check-strings, and cross-purposes, it is destined that a very small proportion of the things aimed at shall ever be attained, and the

punctuality of the scrubby, tubby old *Alice*, paddle-wheel steamer, must be mentioned as in the ranks of the great majority. The crazy bell clangs and calls; the whistle splutters and shrieks for a full hour before, groaning and creaking, she starts up the Derwent, whose waters are roughened and whitened by the gale smiting the reaches not protected by the mountains. Shrouded in waterproofs we crouch thoughtfully under the lee of a pile of goods.

"We are losing some very good scenery, young man," says the Major at last. "Suppose we arise and shake off this unsociable behaviour. You haven't spoken a word since we left Hobart Town, and we are nearing the causeway at Bridgewater."

"Nor have you been remarkably loquacious," is the retort.

By-and-by we rouse ourselves and look around, walk briskly to and fro to keep warm, and pronounce the Derwent to be a magnificent river, and deserving the honour of being the head-quarters, in this end of the world, of the lordly salmon. The scenery in Tasmania is rarely monotonous, and the Derwent passes through a country very highly cultivated, yet, at the same time, diversified by the more rugged features of now rocky bluffs and now wooded summits. The river is always broad and deep, and as the voyage progresses the cultivation increases until, at New Norfolk, it culminates in orchards and hop-fields as fine as any within the island.

"There is a young fellow smoking on the steps of the starboard paddle-box," an acquaintance returning from one of his promenades informs the Major, "who says he knows you."

"What is he like?"

"Not to put too fine a point upon it, he is like a ne'er-do-well. A tramp we should call him at home. He says he knew you in England."

The Major accordingly strolls forward and surveys the stranger from the bows of the steamer. The uncomplimentary description given of him is, after all, just. The young man, smoking a short black pipe on the paddle-box, has the appearance of a vagabond. His age is probably two or three and twenty, and it is pitiable to trace the lines which dissipation and adverse fate have left as a legacy and a sign. His boots are brown, worn out, and tied with spunyarn; he wears no collar; his elbows are out; his coat shines with greasy thread-bareness; his hair, light brown and inclined to be curly if allowed fair play, is unkempt; and no bath has been honoured of late by his presence.

"How do ye do, ——?" (addressing him by name), he says boldly, and without moving from his recumbent position. He speaks, nevertheless, as if well aware that the situation demands effrontery, yet as though he is at bottom ashamed to put effrontery in force.

"I am well, thank you," the Major answers, distantly, continuing his promenade, and declaring that he has not the most distant idea who the smoker may be.

The stranger at length yawns, steps upon the deck, knocks the ashes out of his dudheen, and puts himself in the Major's path. That gentleman in due time approaches, and is at once accosted.

"You don't know me, Mr. R.?" says the young man.

"I do not."

"I lived at——" let us say Farnton.

"Yes? I am a Farnton man, but you certainly have the advantage of me."

"I dare say. My father christened you and married you, though."

"Are you H—— G——?" the Major inquires, aghast.

"That's who I am; and a bright clergyman's son too, am I not?"

"I am horrified to see you in this plight," the other says.

After this strange recognition we hear the young man's story, which it will be no waste of time to repeat, if only as a warning to the well-meaning but wholly foolish people at home—parents, guardians, and what not—who imagine that the shipment of a youth of whom they can make nothing to the colonies is the great cure-all: is the natural loop-hole for themselves out of an unpleasant difficulty, and the sure road to reformation and fortune for the hapless ne'er-do-well. The colonial community that has to be saddled with these precious importations is, naturally, never considered in the business from first to last, and we need not point our moral with the view of convincing those well-meaning but foolish exporters of youthful failures that this consideration ought to enter somewhat into their calculations. It is in the interests of the ne'er-do-well class that Master H. G.'s story shall be briefly told.

In his boyhood the rod was spared and the child was spoiled. The worthy rector of the ivy-covered village church was so absorbed in the doings of the ancients, and the musty creeds of dim ages, that he had neither time nor inclination to rule his own household, and was therefore, according to the doctrine of the book he most reverenced, worse than an infidel. The worthy rector's wife was gifted with many graces and numerous nerves: adorned a sofa, but had no right to undertake the high responsibilities of motherhood.

Whether, with proper training, H. G. would have

arrived at creditable manhood, who shall say? A tyrant in his cradle, as a child he tortured dumb animals, and hectored over nurses and dependents. Unchecked as a boy, selfishness fostered passions, naturally strong, into riotous ascendancy. He brought shame to his father, whom he ridiculed and robbed, and heaviness to his mother, who had neither his love nor fear. The young man was a byword to the country side, a disgrace to every school he entered.

Men of the worthy rector's type often surprise their friends by sudden ebullitions of determination that are not unfrequently ill-timed and even unjust, but that are invariably adamantine in their strength. The Rev. Mr. G. was an example of this peculiarity. He had grieved to see his son select companions from poachers and pothouse heroes, had mourned when vicious propensities cropped into a hideous harvest, had eaten the bread and water of affliction when the boy persisted in returning to the broad highway leading to destruction. But he had been little more than a passive spectator. The time came for swift action. The postman one morning delivered a letter at the rectory door, conveying the intelligence that H. G. was in London, an outcast, a prodigal of the prodigals, in want.

"Send him to Australia."

That was the advice tendered by every one. This is the advice constantly tendered under similar circumstances, and, the advice taken, all that duty demands is supposed to be done.

The family lawyer, who had communicated the scapegrace's plight to his father, was not a stranger to this exportation business. He had seen something of it before. It was, in truth, a favourite plan of his, and

the recommendation he made to the rector was not the first, second, or third of the kind he had successfully advanced.

"Send him to Australia." That was the panacea.

The Rev. Mr. G. adopted the advice, refused to see his son, sent him out in the world's wilderness blessingless, and shut up his heart against him. Not that this troubled the scapegrace for the infinitesimal part of a minute. What excited his interest chiefly was the knowledge that his passage to Melbourne was to be paid, and that on leaving the ship the captain was empowered to put into his hands the sum of fifty pounds sterling, with which, from henceforth, he was to shift for himself. This is the usual process with ne'er-do-wells, and it was faithfully adhered to in the case of H. G. And the usual result ensued. It soon became clear that the last place in the world to which such a lad should have been sent was a young colony like Australia, where working bees are welcomed, and drones not required. Left entirely to his own resources, with new experiences involving self-denials of many kinds, and temptations as new as the experiences, he would not dig, and to beg he was not ashamed. In Melbourne fifty pounds sterling in the hands of a spendthrift is a mere snow-flake on the river.

Money gone, the young man began that "new career" which, in fiction and on the stage, looks so promising a part of the send-him-to-Australia scheme. All that could be done between the digging and begging he, in a fitful fashion, attempted. The land of plenty it was, but not to him, the hungry wanderer, knowing none, unknown by all. He found at last that by the roughest sweat of his brow alone could he live, and so, doggedly and grudgingly, he entered upon one of

those restless lives not uncommon in the colonies, but probably incredible to the comprehensions of people at home.

Of course, he tried his hand at the diggings, and abandoned the toil in disgust. He was ostler at a wayside tavern in the bush. He was a bill-sticker here, a pedlar there. He worked as a bullock-driver, and was a hewer of wood and drawer of water for a German market gardener. For a while he appeared as a billiard-marker and club-house waiter in Sydney. Ever on the move, disreputably living from hand to mouth, but still living and finding the means to move from place to place, he contrived to cram a very bitter experience into those four years of banishment.

"And what are you doing now?" the Major inquires, after the youth has made an end of his story.

"Working for a horse-dealer at Hobart Town. He is lying drunk in the fore cabin at present, and we are going up to New Norfolk for a mob of horses."

"It is a thousand pities a man with an education should be in your position?" I remark.

"It is just young fellows with what you call education who *are* in my position out here. If I knew a trade, it would be different. Pooh! There are hundreds of gentlemen's sons in Australia a deucish deal more down on their luck than I am. Their fathers' labourers wouldn't own 'em when they have been here six months. There's a cab-driver in Hobert Town, the second son of Earl A.; and a man who turns the machine at a printer's is the nephew of Lord B. May I trouble you for a light from your cigar? Thanks. Oh, we find our level here, I can tell you."

"What can I do for him?" the Major asks of his acquaintance.

"Nothing," he replies. "Wait and make inquiries at Hobart Town. If there be a spark of truth in his story, or worth in him, set him on his legs; if not, there is nothing to be done."

"It is very sad."

"Yes; sad, but common enough. He speaks truly in saying there are hundreds of delicately born and bred men in these colonies who are glad to do the most menial work for a bare living. If all the young men of good family who have been sent out to Australia to begin life anew could be mustered on one spot, in review order, the spectacle would be wonderfully strange and inexpressibly sad."

"Will you come and dine with us?" the Major, after some hesitation, asks the young man.

"Thanks! Dining isn't in my line, Mr. R. No; I take things as they come; but if I sat down with you and your friend, and used a table-napkin once more, I might be set a-thinking, and raise the seven devils the governor used to say I had within me. Good evening."

And the young man went ashore with a bitter laugh, promising to return for his employer, who was not yet sufficiently sober to be landed.

Taking our ease at our inn, we discuss the affairs of young G., and the class of ne'er-do-wells whom he represents, and the conclusion at which we arrive is not badly put by the Major:—

"So far as I can see, it comes to this. None but labouring men or mechanics who are prepared to work hard and rough it, or energetic, intelligent, steady fellows with a capital of not less than one or two thousand pounds, should come to these colonies. All the evil tendencies of a scapegrace are likely to be

developed and strengthened in the necessarily imperfect conditions of colonial life. A prodigal may be brought to his senses, and may return with a well-filled purse to make amends for the past, but it only occurs in real life in one case out of a hundred. That is my twenty years' colonial experience."

CHAPTER X.

THE SALMON PONDS: PAST AND PRESENT.

The Lachlan—Lost fish the tyro's friends—The river Derwent—Liberty regained—The Governor's loss—Wise after the event—The Governor's luck—Doctors differing—Tasmanian resources — The Government-pay system — An enterprising owner—A garden — Fruit and hops — Tame subject for rhapsody—An angling picture—The salmon ponds—Exhibition trout—Ponds and hatching-house—History of acclimatization.

On the morning after arrival at New Norfolk, we, according to custom, sally out at daybreak, and make for the small mountain stream known as the Lachlan. It was not opened for angling till last season. The acclimatizers of trout and salmon throughout Tasmania have done the utmost to protect the fisheries, and not the least sensible provision is that which keeps the river close until the fish have arrived at maturity. The Lachlan is accordingly at this time in much request, and since the opening of the season, which in Tasmania commences on the 1st November and ends on the 30th April, splendid sport has been enjoyed. Rods have been at work morning, noon, and night, and the little Lachlan, as one of the villagers expresses it, has been well-nigh fished to death. We nevertheless

return with a brace and a half of herring-sized trout. The Major hooked a fish which, being held by too tight a line, escaped with a Limerick hook in its jaws.

"Lost fish are the tyro's true friends," I tell him, in consolation. "In angling, as in all business and sport, in love and in war, you learn most from reverses."

After breakfast we book, per coach, for the salmon ponds. Leaving New Norfolk, we follow the course of the river Derwent, of which it may be said that from its source in Lake St. Clair, two thousand feet above the level of the sea, to its debouchment into the Southern Ocean at Storm Bay, it does nothing inconsistent with its proud position as the most prominent member of the aristocracy of Australasian streams. An Australian river in nine cases out of ten is a delusion; the colonials were not a shade too modest when they began the habit of designating all rivers, great and small, by the prosaic name of creek. The head waters of a few rivers on the Australian continent would for beauty satisfy even a Highlander or an Irishman, whose memory will not be traitor to the foaming salmon haunts by which his youthful footsteps strayed. The typical Australian river, however, may be summed up in three words—Mud, Mangrove, Mosquito.

It is not in much that Tasmania can boast superiority over its go-ahead and growing sister colonies across the Strait. Perhaps in nothing but scenery and climate. And in scenery naturally come the rivers. The Derwent heads the long list. How many tributaries, sub-tributaries, and sub-sub-tributaries it graciously permits to enjoy its patronage is not known, but it certainly comprises half the southern portion of the island in its watershed, and is the tutelary genius of the fertile midlands. At New Norfolk it is as broad as

the Thames at Maidenhead, and above New Norfolk, in a north-westerly direction, where it in succession receives with becoming stateliness the Clyde, the Ouse, and the Dee, all bringing the latest contributions from the lake district due north, it remains broad, but is studded with rocks and sandy shallows, out of which are born the dark strong pools; swift, boiling, clear streams; babbling, creaming, sparkling stickles; seething, curving eddies; and flashing, tumbling falls; such as the heart of the angler loveth.

The road upon which the coach by-and-by halts to breathe the horses is bounded on the one side by a wall of rugged rock. On the other it abruptly, and unfenced, invites a rapid descent through brake, brier, and scrub to the river, which, not pursuing too sinuous a course, nevertheless, by its continual meanderings, offers a welcome variety of scene. The point at which the driver has paused commands a bend of peculiar picturesqueness. A reef of black-headed, slippery rocklets obtrudes diagonally half across the stream, and in the normal condition of the river here is to be found the best fishing water in the locality, for a boat can approach to within casting distance of the "eye" of the streams, and in the deepest portions can push close to the rocks. Green hop-gardens and yellow corn-fields give colour to the foreground, and beyond, the mountains as usual rise range above range, till the higher peaks are dimly outlined in the lower clouds.

We are within view of an angler spinning from a boat, and no man can hope to fish the Derwent artistically, and with full measure of justice to the river, without that aid. We do not watch the angler long before the salmon rod, bending and trembling, proclaims a stricken fish, and above the murmur of the water we

can hear the shrill inspiriting music of the multiplier winch, as the fish fiercely and straight ahead takes out the nicely humoured line. Thirty yards down stream a mad something leaps clean out of water: leaps again and again. The sun burnishes its silvered side as it curls over on its third essay and plunges below to make the most of its regained liberty.

"That is the Governor," announces the driver.

And, in truth, if he were a thousand times the Governor, I don't envy him his feelings at the present moment. If he is not a swearing man, he will sit down in silence, sick at heart, for at least sixty seconds.

His Excellency, after winding in his line, and examining his spinning flight to discover if possible the cause of his loss, certainly does sit down; but whether the second clause of the prediction is verified cannot be averred. Governors, and even the royal personages they represent, when their game escapes them, doubtless have their feelings like other folks.

It would not be human nature if we spectators, somewhat of anglers ourselves, witnessing the incident, did not criticize it. It is proverbially easy to be wise after the event, and easier still to catch a lusty fish—in theory. In the abstract, however, one person's criticism is sound when he insists that the angler who does not lower the point of his rod the instant a fish breaks water ought to lose his fish and except by the merest chance, will surely do so.

It may here be parenthetically stated, as an indication of what sport the Derwent yields, that this angling visit of Governor Weld, of which we see one episode, is thus described in the newspapers of a later date:—

"His Excellency, who was anxious to catch some

salmon, and thus personally prove beyond doubt that that fish had been successfully acclimatized here, fished two mornings and two evening in the rivers Derwent and Plenty. The water having been discoloured by rain, he was at first only successful with spinning bait; but yesterday morning the water became clearer, and more fit for fly-fishing, and consequently his Excellency managed to land some very nice fish. His success was as follows:—One salmon weighing 8½ lbs., which Sir Robert Officer states is the largest salmon yet caught in Tasmania, and which was killed with spinning bait; one salmon grilse, 4 lbs., caught with a salmon fly (the second which has been captured in that way); one trout, 3 lbs.; one ditto, 1¾ lbs.; one ditto, 1½ lbs.; one ditto, about 1 lb.; one ditto, ½ lb. The total weight of the fish caught was a little over 20 lbs. The distinction between the salmon and the trout is clearly marked, not only by the colour and shape, but also by the teeth, which is one of the most reliable tests. The four-pound grilse was a remarkably handsome and very game little fish, making several determined runs, and twice leaping high out of the water. Another large fish was unfortunately lost through a defect in the fishing tackle. It may be interesting to sportsmen to learn that the fly was one tied by Farlow, medium size, an Irish pattern; wings mixed, body smooth, bright blue, silver twist, and hackle jay. Last season, the Governor rose and touched a heavy fish to an Irish fly, blue, rough body; and about a fortnight ago, he killed seven trout, averaging 1⅛ lb. in weight."

I shall be under the necessity hereafter of referring to the question of salmon or no salmon; at present, to avoid the high crime of misleading the confiding, it is incumbent upon me to state that there is such a ques-

tion in Tasmania, and that the identical fish of eight and a half pounds which the excellent authority referred to declared was the largest salmon yet caught in Tasmania, was declared by an equally excellent authority in Hobart Town to be no salmon at all, but a salmon trout. The learned doctors differing, who shall decide?

En route we ride over the estate of one of the Major's friends. The owner had come out from the old country in days when property was to be had cheap in Van Dieman's Land, and was able to secure it on easy terms. The visitor to Tasmania will often be struck with the want of enterprise displayed by the few who own the land. They are generally well-to-do and sluggish. What does it matter? People say the curse of the old Government-pay system, of the period when a thousand pounds per day of public money was spent somehow in the island, still rests upon the land, and must be cleansed and purged away before the inhabitants will be spurred into enterprise. The casual visitor has probably neither time nor inclination to probe into the cause of the existing stagnation, but he returns whence he came marvelling that an island where, if large portions are poor and only fit for sheep grazing, wheat and oats grow as if to the manner born, where fruits and vegetables thrive as in England, where sheep are so plentiful and good that Victoria was stocked from it, where various industries are possible—should be content to remain in a deep sleep, without much prospect of awakening until the next generation succeeds to the comfortable, happy-go-lucky proprietors who are now lords of the soil.

The estate in question is an example of enterprise, and what it accomplishes. A portion is cultivated, and

a portion formed into a run which carries merino sheep that are renowned over all the colonies. No other warranty is required with stud sheep on the runs, even of remote Queensland, than the assurance that they come from this Tasmanian run.

The gentleman upon whose property the salmon ponds are situated, when we arrive at his house, invites us to luncheon before inspecting the fish, and noticing my admiration of such a garden as I have not seen since leaving England, suggests a preliminary turn through it. We enter; refresh ourselves with raspberries, cherries, gooseberries; light a cigarette in an arbour covered with roses and honeysuckles; finish it under a wide-spreading walnut tree; inhale the odour of the herb borders; notice the asparagus, peas, seakale, and all the commoner vegetables; and behold how the owner can literally sit under his own vine and fig tree. Everything useful and pleasant to the eye seems to be grown in this garden, and the absence of any formal system in the disposition of the flowers, fruits, and vegetables, is its greatest charm. Prim formality in a garden is odious. We may take it for granted the Garden of Eden was not planted on the riband system. It is the description of garden that may be coaxed to bloom all the year round, and to blend flowers, fruits, and vegetables according to their colours and shapes. It is almost an almanac; you might tell the month and the period of the month by looking at the flower-beds.

A brook runs under the enclosing hedges, separating the garden from a large hop-field, in which the blossoms, strong and healthy, are beginning to droop and twine in rich clusters on the tops of the poles. The field, not less than one hundred acres in area, is irrigated artificially by little channels turned between the rows as

occasion requires. Tasmania can grow an unlimited quantity of hops, but there is not sufficient labour to gather in the harvest. The hop-pickers, who come from the capital and elsewhere, and are quite as miscellaneous and roving a set as their compatriots at home, always come here first. Scarcity of labour makes the humblest people independent, and some of the Tasmanian hop-growers who do not understand how to treat *employés* have to bribe, implore, and pay through the nose to attract a scanty band of hop-pickers. As we leave the garden a number of poor-looking women and children file in and commence picking the fruit. Our host gives the cottagers the privilege of freedom of the fruit trees. Cherries, currants, and raspberries are often to be seen in Tasmania rotting on the ground; it does not pay to hire people to gather them. Our host solves the difficulty by supplying his poorer neighbours with the means of laying in a store of jams that shall last them till fruit time comes round again. They never abuse the privilege, and never forget the thoughtfulness of their master. He has cured so many snake-bitten persons that, of their own motion, they last year subscribed out of their pence enough to purchase and present him with an inkstand. The gift, suitably inscribed, was ordered from England, and presented to him on his birthday.

Tasmanian drives somehow do put the edge of a very razor upon your appetite; and although a luncheon tray brought into a dining-room by a housemaid is scarcely the subject you would select for rhapsody, the healthy colour of the girl's face, the snow white of her apron, the noiselessness of her footfall, the stone-pitcher foaming over with home-brewed ale, the sweet butter, the brown home-baked bread, the newly made cheese, and

the crisp green cresses, are in such startling contrast to ordinary bush experience that I observe each item in detail, and think that though the Disraelian epicure expressed a wish to die eating ortolans to slow music, I would prefer to have honest bread and cheese and ale, and live.

In the room there is an angling picture. It is a small water-colour, admirably done, and evidently by an artist of the pre-Raphaelite school. From the gloomy recesses of a pine forest a stream comes tumbling down rock over rock, till, tired of its headlong speed, it foams round a fretted jutting crag and flows peacefully. Out of the crag a rude kind of chair has been worn, and upon this is seated a young lady, watching with pretty, half-frightened, and half-pitying eyes a spruce cavalier, who, standing a little above her, is in the act of removing a hook from a fish's mouth. The young lady holds the rod, and nothing can be more certain than that she is, in a double sense, a successful angler. She has sat in the niche in the crag, and taken lessons from her companion, he leaning over her shoulder; she, no doubt, prettily protesting, and casting her line with many a maidenly exclamation and much shyness. The unwary fish has been hooked by the winsome girl, whose tremor has brought the swain still closer to her side, and their hands very close together upon the rod, until, in the midst of confusion and palpitation which both would have prolonged, the captive is removed from its natural sphere, and lo! here is the gentleman firmly holding the fish in his left hand, while with his right he is, as considerately as the circumstances permit, disengaging the barb. The rogue does not hurry, however, for the blue eyes fixed so intently upon the process are necessarily turned upwards, and his also necessarily

take a downward direction. It is one of the few happy angling pictures I have seen.

The salmon ponds are charmingly surrounded, and fed by the river Plenty, a tributary of the Derwent. A wicker gate opens into a lawn-like paddock, in which is a long artificial lake, fringed with English and Australian trees alternately. The ash fraternizes with the blue gum, the sycamore shakes hands with the Norfolk Island pine, the poplar nods all day long to the dark, glossy leaves of the Moreton Bay fig. Violet and white lilies are opening on the surface of the lake. Seats are distributed under the shady trees. In a remote corner an aviary contains an emu, parrots and cockatoos, and some silver pheasants. In another corner a sleek pet Alderney is tethered. The bailiff's cottage is in the centre of an oblong garden, fenced in with a thick, closely clipped hedge of yew, and the garden itself is laid out in beds of diverse patterns, with dense borders of box.

Jasmine, woodbine, and roses climb up the verandah to the roof; for it is the one-story weatherboard bungalow, with shingle roof, which in these colonies of primeval forest and useful timber is the most convenient stamp of building, though in Tasmania, where good stone is plentiful and the climate colder, a more solid style of house is becoming the rule.

The salmon ponds are one of the institutions of Tasmania, and visitors to Hobart Town are always recommended to take the journey to New Norfolk for the sake of the cradle home of the interesting salmon family. If there were no ponds and breeding processes to inspect, the striking bits of rural scenery along the drive to Redlands would repay the visitor; but many ladies and gentlemen from the British Islands, America,

and the continent, making a pleasure tour of the globe, and including Tasmania in their round of calls, have confessed that at these salmon ponds they have for the first time in their lives seen the mystery of fish hatching by artificial means.

All visitors are courteously accorded permission to see what is to be seen at the ponds, and the water bailiff in the employ of the Government, should he be at home, imparts necessary information, and by way of practical illustration puts the show fish, if the expression may be used, through their paces.

The ponds are on the estate of Mr. R. C. Read, an enthusiastic gentleman, who, with the late Mr. Morton Allport, Sir R. Officer, and others, has earned public thanks for the grand success of the experiment. Our party are fortunate enough to secure the company of Mr. Read to the ponds, and consequently the explanations and knowledge of an educated man who has chapter and verse at his finger ends.

The river Plenty runs beside the path leading from the private grounds to the salmon ponds, and about midway the visitors are requested to pause on the top of a steep bank and look into the river. At this point it is steep and slow, but so clear that every stone in the rocky bed is visible. Not a fish is in sight. The keeper throws in pieces of boiled liver, and before they have sunk a couple of inches they are seized by voracious trout, which, darting from their hiding-places down stream, make short work of the dainty morsels, for which, no doubt, they are continually on the look-out. In the course of a few minutes there are perhaps a dozen greedy fish collected at the rendezvous, genuine brown trout of four pounds and downwards, which, ready as they are to grab without ceremony what the

keeper gives them, defy the best attempts of the most accomplished anglers who would practise upon their credulity with any bait that conceals a hook.

The ponds, and races which feed them, are in communication with the river Plenty. Opposite the keeper's cottage is a circular pond of some forty feet in diameter, stocked with what we term stud brown trout—magnificent fellows, whom, by a liberal supply of boiled liver, you may entice almost to your feet, and who, when in good appetite, create a prodigious turmoil in the water by their desperate rushes at the offerings thrown them from land. To oblige our party, and as a special favour, Mr. Read has a net thrown into the pond, and amongst the trout brought to bank is one splendidly marked and shaped fish, not a pennyweight less than eight pounds, and of most comely proportions.

Close by this pond is the hatching house, in which are gravelled troughs, sluices, and boxes constructed on the pattern of the famous Stormontfield establishment on the Tay. Below the house is a long pond for the storing of salmon trout; here, a small fly being thrown by the keeper, a specimen, perhaps twelve inches long, immediately takes the bait, is tenderly landed in the net, and with equal tenderness, after inspection, returned to his home.

The *Salmo fario* seems to thrive wonderfully in Tasmanian waters. Fish of eight and nine pounds have been caught at different times, four and five pounders are frequently killed by anglers, and during the early part of 1877 a handsomely shaped and marked trout of sixteen pounds was taken by spinning with a small white fish in the Derwent. The salmon trout (*S. trutta*) also breed healthily, and to many well-informed persons it is still an open question whether the few captured

fish said to have been salmon were not, after all, salmon trout. It is heresy to suggest this doubt to a Tasmanian, but to this moment, though there is every presumption in favour of the existence of the noble *Salmo salar* in Tasmanian waters, there has been no proof positive, such as would be required to satisfy a jury of experts, albeit in a Hobart Town almanac you have the birth of Thomas Carlyle and the catching of the first salmon recorded as memorable events happening on the same date, the one in 1795, the other in 1873.

Standing under the shade of the fine trees at the salmon ponds, we can enter fully into the important question of salmon or no salmon, and master its history.

Amongst the military officers who comprised the aristocracy of the island during the convict *régime*, there must have been many sportsmen who could not help being struck with the close resemblance of the Tasmanian streams to the best of the trout and salmon rivers of Great Britain; also with the highly favourable character of the climate. Nothing, however, is recorded to have been done till 1841, and then the first reported move was taken. Scotchmen were at the bottom of it. The master of a vessel (a Scotchman) trading between London and Tasmania applied to a Ross-shire gentleman for salmon fry for Tasmania, but the supply not being to hand when the skipper sailed, nothing came of the motion. In 1848, a gentleman of the Tasmanian Survey Department, on leave of absence, visited the manager of the Duke of Sutherland's fisheries in Scotland, to consult him on the practicability of introducing salmon and trout into Tasmania, and was recommended either to take out the spawn or the young fish—the first method in preference. Attempts to bring out salmon spawn were reported by Governor Denison in

1849 to have failed, proving that attempts of some description had been made. Earl Grey closed a long official correspondence in the following year by declining to take any steps in the matter, and by objecting to the expense of fitting up a welled smack that had been proposed to carry out the living fish.

Sir William Denison and the gentleman of the Survey Department before mentioned (Mr. Burnett) were not, however, to be extinguished, and their persistent faith at length led to the shipment of salmon and trout ova in a tank from London. On the arrival of the consignment at Tasmania, the tank, water, and gravel were found in good order; but, alas! neither spawn nor fish could be discovered. In 1852, a Mr. Bidwell, of New South Wales, forwarded to Sir W. Denison, whose energies in the movement never flagged, a paper suggesting the exact process which ultimately proved successful, namely, the process of packing the spawn (not freezing it, as many suppose) in ice. The Tasmanian Government and the Royal Society of Tasmania then took the matter up actively, and the legislature voted five hundred pounds for the introduction of salmon. It only required an able and willing gentleman in England to act with corresponding energy in renewing the experiment, and that gentleman fortunately appeared in Mr. J. A. Youl, an old colonist residing in London, who threw himself into the project with a zeal that never tired, until the difficult undertaking, prosecuted in spite of almost hopeless failures, was carried through.

In 1860, however, another failure was recorded, the fifteen tons of Wenham Lake ice, taken on board for the preservation of the ova, having melted long before Tasmania was reached. In 1862 a more elaborate attempt was made, and though through accidents and

stress of weather the ova perished in transit, it was shown that, under favourable circumstances, a contrary result was both possible and probable. Mr. Youl, in London, conducted numerous experiments, interviewed many shipowners, and was ultimately rewarded by Money Wigram and Co. placing fifty tons of room at his disposal gratis in one of their clipper ships. It was necessary to make arrangements, requiring nice scientific calculation, to keep the ova at an equable temperament, just above freezing point. Nothing more and nothing less would do. Ninety thousand salmon ova and fifteen hundred trout ova were packed between layers of damp moss in 181 small deal boxes. In some of the boxes charcoal was laid at the bottom, and holes were bored in the lids and bottoms of all. The boxes were then covered in with Wenham Lake ice, in an ice-house fitted up amidships on the lower deck. With fear and trembling, on the arrival of the ship at Melbourne, a box was opened by the gentleman who had the precious cargo in charge, and, to his delight, numbers of the imbedded ova were found to be alive. Redoubled pains were taken in transhipment for Hobart Town.

To end the history, on the 21st April, 1864, ninety days after the shipment in London, the cases of ova were delivered at the salmon ponds, and, though a large percentage of the ova was dead, so much good fortune was left that by the 15th of June three thousand young salmon and fifty troutlet immigrants were swimming about, strong, contented, and merry. In 1866 a second shipment of salmon and a quantity of salmon trout ova arrived safely. The proportion of living ova deposited was estimated at forty-five per cent. of all sent out.

Now comes the absorbing question at issue. What has become of the salmon? The brown trout and salmon trout may be dismissed without a word, their acclimatization being an undoubted and valuable fact. The first salmon was hatched on the 5th of May, 1864. In thirteen years the salmon should have arrived at their ripest maturity, and if their new home had, as in the case of the brown trout, proved extraordinarily favourable to development, there should be salmon in the Derwent of sixty, seventy, ay, and eighty pounds.

The rapid growth of the salmon is well known. The gentleman referred to above as the manager of the Duke of Sutherland's salmon fisheries (Mr. Young) instituted a series of experiments many years ago. Smolts descending to the sea in April and May he found returning in June and July grilse of several pounds each—in one instance seven pounds. A number of four-pound grilses were marked in the spring, and after their return from the sea were recaptured in the summer, having in the course of four or five months grown into full-formed salmon, ranging from nine to fourteen pounds. A salmon of twelve pounds was marked on the 4th of March, and was recaptured on its return to the same river on the 10th of July, weighing eighteen pounds.

Where are the Tasmanian salmon?

From time to time gentlemen of known credibility, and various persons employed on the Derwent, have reported seeing what they *believed to be* salmon, grilse, and smolts. On one occasion two fish taken by a net in the estuary below Hobart Town were brought to the Salmon Commissioners, eight gentlemen of ripe experience in salmon lore, appointed by the Government to superintend the introduction and cultivation of the

fish. They pronounced the specimens to be salmon smolts; but one of them sent home for examination was returned by Dr. Günther, of the British Museum, who pronounced it a salmon trout. Another specimen the learned doctor returned with the remark that it presented the usual characteristics of a *Salmo salar*.

In the museum at Hobart Town there is a preserved fish that certainly looks uncommonly like a grilse; and soon after my visit to the salmon ponds, I myself had the opportunity of eating a four-pound fish, the appearance and flavour of which were such that I could not affirm it was not a true salmon. At the same time, I could not swear it was not a salmon trout.

There were two questions which neither Mr. Read, nor the keeper at the salmon ponds, nor Mr. Morton Allport and the other members of the Commission in Hobart Town, could answer:—Why, if migratory salmon breed as alleged in Tasmanian waters, has no person caught or seen a fish over the debatable borderline of eight, ten, or twelve pounds? Why, also, does it never happen, as at home, that anglers for trout frequently hook the voracious little samlet in the upper waters before it has taken its smolt degree? Such a thing, a positive nuisance sometimes in the old country, has never been heard of in Tasmania.

However, it may be here repeated that the evidence is strongly in favour of the belief that there are salmon; but while many persons accustomed to salmon and salmon rivers from their youth upwards, and better qualified to form an opinion than I am, have pronounced in the affirmative, others still feel it their duty to return a verdict of "Not proven."

NOTE.—Some eighteen months after the foregoing chapter was written, I found the Tasmanian papers still showing that the

doubts respecting salmon had not been altogether removed; and I quote one of the paragraphs as a fair example of an uneasy mind on the subject. It appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and is the best evidence on the side of the salmon I have seen:—

"A TRUE SALMON IN TASMANIA.—The following letter from Mr. Morton Allport appeared in the *Hobart Town Mercury* of July 6: 'Mr. Read writes me that on Wednesday last a splendid female fish, weighing 20 lbs., and 2 feet 11 inches long by 20½ inches in girth, was captured from a spawning bed in the river Plenty, with the view of obtaining the ova for artificial rearing, and Mr. Read adds, "The ova from this large fish—which I believe must be a salmon—are very pink indeed, and I hope we shall succeed in hatching some of them." I also gathered from this letter that the fish, large as she was, had parted with most of the spawn, as only from 700 to 1000 ova could be obtained from her; and this fact tends strongly to confirm Mr. Read's view that this fish was a true salmon; because, had she retained the full complement of eggs, about 18,000, she would have weighed at least 3 lbs. heavier, and a trout of 23 lbs. is all but unheard of. I greatly regret that I had no opportunity of examining this fish, but Mr. Read, finding her getting knocked about in the confined space in which she was placed, wisely turned her back to the river rather than sacrifice her life. The male fish on the same rid weighed about 14 lbs.'"

CHAPTER XI.

SKETCHY AND HISTORICAL.

Daily lounging—Salmon trout in the Derwent—Miscellaneous sport—A colonial picnic—Slammock the shepherd—Snakes—The Schweinfurth family—Tasman's love; being a speculative study embodying the history of Van Dieman's Land.

We have a merry time of it in this neighbourhood. As the weather becomes settled, the cool nights are followed by intensely hot and bright days, and we fish only during the morning and evening hours, devoting the remainder of the day to shady places, books, pipes, note-books, and the god of sleep. We have our favourite places in the shade, where the murmur of water, wind, and insect hums through the trees and shrubs, a cheap and efficient lullaby. The Major is now a proficient, and has ordered up from Hobart Town a complete set of angler's gear, and looks as proud when, for the first time in his life, he dons his wading suit, as no doubt he did when he came triumphant out of his first tussle with a buckjumper. We generally kill a trout or two every day, but the sport is not good. We are too late for fly-fishing, and we have no opportunities of boating on the Derwent with spinning tackle. Still it is better than nothing, though, of course, not equal to the old country. Take

one thing with another, is there in the world a better country for all-round sport than the British Islands?

Nevertheless, we have not disgraced ourselves. Spinning with a gudgeon-like fish found in the brooks, we have slain three salmon trout in the Derwent, and several brown trout have fallen victims to a depraved taste for impaled grasshoppers. We have shot rabbits till we are tired; have bagged a black cockatoo; a couple or so of the long-legged water-bird called native hen, and a wallaby and paddymelon (small marsupials), knocked over as they came down to the water to drink.

We take part in a true colonial picnic also; we literally on such an occasion "go a-gipsying." No pains are spared to make this event a high success. Fowls are larded, turkeys stuffed, and salmon trout converted into mayonnaise. The rendezvous is at eleven o'clock in the forenoon. The day is fortunately cloudless and bright. No fewer than fifteen saddle horses and ponies are tied to the palings when the whole party assembles in front of and within the comfortable farmhouse, and it is as pretty and merry a gathering as the eye of man could desire. The place where the picnic is to be held can be reached only by saddle, and this naturally adds to the pleasure of the day. Even the farmer's wife for once puts on her habit and mounts her old grey, and there are children of ten and eleven (though it is a parlous business in the colonies to speak of girls of ten and eleven as children) ready to race, log-jump, or rush at post and rails with the pluckiest.

The eatables and drinkables are placed snugly upon pack-horses, which, when laden, resemble the sapper and miners' contingent of an advancing army. To one especially sure-footed and sober-minded pony is rele-

gated the task of conveying the bottle and jug department—the sensible animal being apparently quite aware that he is a kind of walking canteen from whom much is expected.

The cavalcade is led by a strange being, to wit, Slammock, the farm shepherd. The old fellow is very furzy in the matter of hair, very doubled up as to seat (his knees being hoisted in the air by a remarkable shortness of stirrups), and he is blind of one eye while there is something of the gimlet about the other. Slammock's pony having great bushiness of mane and forelock and crookedness of leg, and having had an eye gouged out by a charging bullock, matches well with his master. The man and pony are well-known characters for miles round. The man seldom speaks, and the pony seldom runs. Slammock has been a convict, and for some trivial offence at Port Arthur, so gossip avers, was sentenced to execution, was led out to be hanged, had the rope round his neck, and had heard the opening sentences of the burial service read by the chaplain, when a reprieve came. He grinned in the chaplain's face because the service was interrupted, and left the scaffold saying with a hoarse laugh, "Thank you for nothing."

This extraordinary individual has been requested by his master to guide the expedition through a newly made bush track, a commission he has sullenly accepted without a word of response. All this is explained to me by the farmer as we ride through the lightly timbered bush. Once the shepherd had not been heard to speak for a whole year. He could however, write a good letter, and his master, after many unavailing attempts to enlist his sympathy, humoured him so far as to allow all communications to be made in writing.

But it is too bright a day, the party is too light-hearted, the canter over the turf too inspiriting, to allow us to trouble much about the taciturn Slammock. The younger people in the cavalcade by-and-by amuse themselves by leaping over the logs. The equestrian procession eventually turns into a sandy bush road, and the main body are in advance, riding slowly abreast across it, counting the snake tracks, in the discovery of which there is much friendly emulation. One soon gets accustomed to the trail of the serpent on sandy ground. The reptiles generally go straight over it when crossing a forest path, leaving a clearly defined line about half an inch deep in the dust. Some dozen snakes seem to have made their mark upon the road during the morning.

"Is England really so much like Tasmania?" a young lady asks me, as we ride together behind the advance-guard; and a little dialogue ensues.

I answer, "Naturally, no. In its salient natural features Tasmania is like Australia. The scenery is bolder, the foliage is fuller, the rivers more picturesque; but it is Australia, nevertheless. It is, after all, gum-tree country, improved by the addition of English trees, vegetables, and flowers."

"For example, what is the difference between this and an English forest?"

"The difference is very great. It always makes me severely homesick when I recall it. Here, and to an even greater extent in Australia, you may ride the whole day through without seeing beast or hearing bird; at home every bush would hold a blithe songster, and signs of life would be everywhere. Here indigenous wild flowers have to be sought for patiently and with poor success; at home hill and dale are painted with lovely colours."

"That must be very beautiful. But do you think you do Tasmania full justice? We have, during our ride, seen quantities of rosella parrots, which, you must admit, have brilliant plumage; there are wattle-birds flying over our head now, and miner-birds are very plentiful. We have a number of tiny bush birds that will pass almost for humming-birds."

"And you have cormorants to eat the fish."

"Yes; and papa shoots numbers of quail and snipe and waterfowl in the season, and pigeons."

"I was speaking generally; and only wished to convey my belief that, take it all in all, meadows and woods, town and country, mansion and homestead, fish, flesh, and fowl, there is no country in the world like Old England."

"They have killed a black snake," shouts a little lady, cantering up at this point of the conversation. "Come and see it."

And we canter on to see the ugly yet handsome reptile, with its metallic black and brilliant orange skin.

There is not much talking for the next quarter of an hour. We are occupied in getting down a steep and stony descent, which would have been avoided if the ill-conditioned Slammock had not rudely ridden off in a huff; but little difficulties of this kind are what the young colonial of either sex loves. The "new chum," perhaps, enjoys this phase of the ride least of all, and though he is bound to follow the girls, as their horses gingerly pick their steps down the ridge, he is not backward in confessing, when it is over, that his heart has been in his mouth. As for the clever cantineer pony, he is freed from the leading strap, and allowed to lead the way with no other guide than the instinct

which is developed to an almost miraculous extent in a bush horse.

A ford is crossed at the bottom, and then the whole party emerge upon a plateau adjoining a bit of scrub, under the shadows of whose interlaced creepers and glossy foliage a fire is made, and camp pitched, the horses being turned *en masse* into a paddock belonging to Schweinfurth, a poor German settler.

Poor indeed! A small detachment of the picnicking party stroll on by the river bank to the rude slab hut where the Schweinfurth family live. Clearing the scrub and bush foot by foot with patience and severe toil, father, mother, and children have laboured from morning to night, and from year to year—type of the German settler wherever he may be found. Their hearts must have sunk within them when they first arrived upon their newly acquired possession, and put up their habitation of rough-hewn slabs, covered in with sheets of bark. Schweinfurth is a Prussian, and has groaned under the burdens imposed upon him by the proprietor who harshly lorded it over the miserable acres of which the Schweinfurths, as peasants born, were simply part and parcel. He heard of the new lands at the other side of the world; was captivated by the glowing pictures of independence drawn by the emigration agent; shook the dust of Fatherland off his feet, and literally came out into the wilderness.

Mrs. Schweinfurth may have been pretty and womanly once. She looks neither now, wrinkled and tanned until her skin resembles nothing so much as old unclean leather. Stockings and shoes are unknown apparently in the family, which, dirty, ragged, and with matted hair, assembles outside the wretched humpy to

gaze upon the happy, well-dressed picnickers, who pause at the sliprails, hesitating whether to enter or retreat.

Yet the Schweinfurths are making headway, and are probably unconscious of being objects of pity. Here is a patch of sweet potatoes; there the young green of a vigorous maize crop rewards toil with an open smile. Poultry cluck and clackle; cattle are browsing in the bush; a couple of bony horses are tied to a dray that resembles a dug-out canoe on wheels. Dead timber is burning; logs are lying about. Bit by bit the battered antique plough is turning up virgin earth. In a word, these German settlers, eating the bread—nay, the husks and refuse—of carefulness, and toiling more like "dumb driven cattle" than heroes in the strife against heavy odds, are wrenching a bare subsistence from the stubborn soil.

They are first-rate settlers, these Germans, but they are not generally liked, especially by the Irish immigrants. Schweinfurth's cart, for instance, a short time ago broke down through the roughness of the road, and there it has remained, up the mountain, because no one would help him set it up again. This antipathy exists in Australia also. I do not exactly know why it is. The Germans work like slaves, and cheaply; they live where any other people would starve; they live together in a primitive fashion; but they are unsociable, or have the reputation of being so, and greedy.

In the first paragraph of this chapter reference has been made to note-books. I now refer to that reference in order to transcribe from the note-book which about this time is on service, a half-speculative effusion respecting the discoverer of Tasmania. Upon visiting a

new country, one should always grind up its history and attack its literature. To the best of my ability I have done this act of duty to Tasmania, and this is how I boil down the results in the aforesaid note-book, premising that the only speculative matter is that relating to Tasman's love affairs :—

"This Abel Jansen Tasman must have been by nature a loyal as well as a brave man; loyal to his country, to his friends, and to his own sturdy notions of right and wrong. It is not much that we know about him, and the little at our disposal comes chiefly through his deeds, as related by others. Tasman himself is mostly absent from the scene. Once or twice he makes an entrance upon the stage where stirring dramas are being played, but it is not a little strange that he, who should have been one of its central figures, merely flits twice across, and then makes an abrupt and everlasting exit.

"To me there are, in one fact which has been handed down to us, many excellent materials for a portrait. He loved Maria van Diemen, daughter of the Dutch Governor of Batavia. We are told in the barest words that he loved and won. We have little more than this statement, and a few brief records of the voyages he successfully prosecuted; but it is ample for an intelligible framework, and imagination can without much difficulty fill up the intervening space.

"It seems of late to have become the fashion in England to erect monuments to great men who lived and worked and died centuries ago, but whose merits do not appear to have been adequately recognized until their graves were very old. Should our friends in Tasmania by-and-by wake up to the conviction that Tasman deserves some sort of visible memorial in the

island he discovered, they may appropriately go to Sir Walter Scott for an inscription :—

> "'In peace, love tunes the shepherd's reed;
> In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
> In halls, in gay attire is seen;
> In hamlets dances on the green.
> Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
> And men below, and saints above;
> For love is heaven, and heaven is love.'

"Tasman, as a successful discoverer in the palmy era in which he lived, must have endured many hardships, encountered perils by land and sea, and overcome obstacles without number. On the pavement of the Stadhouse at Amsterdam they laid down a chart of Australia—a rough outline of it, at any rate—that the wealthy merchants, whose argosies in those days were on every sea, might know somewhat of the New Holland from which they hoped so much, and the discovery of which they jealously guarded as a national secret.

"It was from the information given by Captain Abel Jansen Tasman that this early map of the colony was drawn. How many of the burghers, engaged in the commerce prosecuted by the famous East India Company of the Netherlands, reading the names of Maria Island, in Tasmania, and Cape Maria on the north-west point of Auckland, suspected, or knew, that love was the mainspring of all? Perhaps men, in time so full of bustle and commerce, and so overshadowed with the flush of high victory, were too absorbed in the spirit of trade enterprise to spare a moment for romantic affection not immediately concerning themselves. But love is paramount in all ages and all countries, and Tasman imitated the love-sick Orlando, a personage of whom it is not likely he had ever heard—for the Dutch

were not, like their gayer neighbours of France, devoted to any of the joyous sciences—but whose example he copied, carving the name of his Rosalind, not upon the trunks of stately forest trees, but upon the imperishable pages whereon are recorded the actions of brave men.

"That early part of the seventeenth century will always be memorable to Hollanders. The Dutch had passed through stormy times, had fought great sea fights with the Spaniards, had sent out the gallant Heemskirk and others of like mould, and had despatched their ships on adventurous voyages to the unknown East and mysterious South. In 1605 they discovered the northern part of Australia—at all events they claim the discovery. It is, however, not necessary to accept the statement as gospel. Some say a southern continent was known to the Romans; I defy any one to prove that what we call Australia had not been known for centuries to the Chinese; and there are, I remember, some old maps in the British Museum suggesting that the Portuguese knew something of Australia a hundred years before Tasman was born. Even, however, if this new continent was visited before by Europeans, in the absence of definite information we are quite justified in giving all credit to the Dutch voyagers. The facts, moreover, point strongly to the theory that it was an unknown land.

"The Dutch East India Company was established in 1602, and if, as all the probabilities suggest, the boy Tasman attended the great nautical school in Amsterdam, his imagination would be fired by the marvellous tales of the intrepid navigators who had returned from the Eastern seas with cargoes as curious as they were precious. I make this historical reference to support

my theory that Tasman was a man who achieved success by patient perseverance, and not by the shining of a lucky star. Still, though the times were such as produce men of the Tasman stamp, there were difficulties in store for them. Their employers, the mighty Dutch East India Company, loved to rule them with an arbitrary rod. Le Maire, a skilful navigator, died of chagrin through the ill-treatment he received from his fellow-countrymen in Batavia, where the seeds of arbitrariness sown at home soon ripened into unwholesome fruit. Schouten, another navigator, was so aggrieved that his application for redress at headquarters is a piece of Dutch history. These are typical examples, taken at hazard, as they occur to me.

"Proud, though, of his profession, as Tasman might have been; nobly desirous, as he probably was, of emulating the achievements of his brave fellow-navigators whose names were known in every Amsterdam household; determined as he showed himself to carry out the difficult undertakings with which he was charged, am I not right in asking whether, with him, love was not lord of all?

"Governor van Dieman assumed the reins of power for the States-General in 1636, and at his Javanese Government House the skipper Abel Jansen Tasman, said by some to have been of obscure birth, was evidently a welcome and probably a frequent visitor. Antony van Dieman was ever a shrewd man, and a shrewd man, including in his other gifts the reading of character, would fix upon Tasman as one likely to further the ambitious projects he entertained. Here the ship captain would meet with Maria van Dieman. Was she fair, with the blonde fairness and comely rotundity of the race, or did she inherit from some

foreign ancestor the raven hair, olive tints, and lissom figure of more southern climes? Did she, the daughter of a ruler entrusted with almost despotic powers, encourage the advances of the favourite captain; or was her hand the promised reward offered by an ambitious father to the man who should add to his glory? To these questions fancy alone can answer.

"The first thing certain, beyond Tasman's existence, is that he sailed from Batavia on the 15th of August, 1642, and returned on the 15th of June, 1643. During those ten months much had been done. The *Heemskirk* and *Zeehan* had touched at the Isle of France, and sailed south in the teeth of stormy winds and waves, one of Tasman's objects being to circumnavigate the New Holland which the Dutch proposed and expected to claim. On the 24th of November, ten miles distant, land was discovered, which Tasman, knowing to be new, named after his patron Van Diemen. Stress of weather compelled him to run to sea, instead of anchoring in Storm Bay, from which he might otherwise have run up the estuary to the site of Hobart Town. So he proceeded up the eastern coast, and to this day the traces of his movements remain in the names given by himself—'Tasman's Isle' and 'Maria Island.'

"Tempest and trial were for the time over; there was a new jewel won for the diadem of Dutch supremacy; and in the hour of triumph Tasman divulged the secret of his heart by coupling with his own name that of her who was his guiding star throughout the dangers of the trackless ocean. Tasman landed on the 1st of December near Frederick Henry's Bay; remained a few days on the coast; sent Peter Jacobez, the carpenter, ashore, to hoist the Dutch

flag. He noted that the timber was very fine, that the natives climbed the trees by cutting steps in the bark, that strange trumpeting noises were heard on shore, that upon the sand were seen the footprints of the tiger or some similar creature, and that gum and lac were gathered from some of the trees.

"It may be asked why Tasman lingered not longer than five days upon the coast of this newly discovered island? Who can tell? May it not be that a strong inner prompting hurried him onward—so that, his work done, he might present himself in honour to claim his adored Maria? Worlds have been lost and worlds gained for love! Be that as it may, Tasman set forth, and continued his voyage until the *Heemskirk* and *Zeehan* cast anchor under a hilly country which he named Staatenland, his anchorage ground being the strait between the North and Middle Islands of New Zealand. Here again we find the combination of Tasman and Maria van Diemen, a bay being named after the former, while a point further up the north-west coast was christened after the latter.

"The same hurry which is observable on the coast of Tasmania is to be noticed now, for Tasman left New Zealand as he had left Tasmania, without determining whether the country he had discovered was an island or part of a continent. One reason might have been shortness of provisions, from which the *Heemskirk* and her consort were known to have suffered. Tasman sailed through the South Sea Islands and along the northern coasts of New Britain and New Guinea, *en route* for Batavia. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind that Tasman was fettered by minute instructions from the Government in whose service he was.

"In the early days of their discoveries in the

Southern seas, the Dutch acted as other nations would have done under similar circumstances, but by-and-by jealousy led them to be silent and secret. Navigators were forbidden under penalties to publish accounts of their voyage; and foreign vessels, finding themselves by accident or design in the Dutch waters of the Southern seas, were roughly treated. So far did the Dutch allow their greed to obtain sway, that Sir W. Temple says he has often heard the Dutch say that their East India Company had peremptorily stopped further discoveries, fearing that some more populous nations of Europe might establish trade which would interfere with their commerce. By this light we can understand why so few records are extant of the important voyages of discovery amongst which Tasman's must take a foremost place.

"It would be interesting to know how Tasman fared with Fräulein Maria on his return from discovering Van Diemen's Land. Since he sailed on a second voyage in the following year (1644), with most elaborate instructions for his guidance, his time would be doubtless pretty fully occupied. An occasional stroll amongst the tropical trees and shrubs of Government House grounds was, perhaps, the extent of the captain's opportunities. Who knows that a rival had not appeared upon the scene—a travelling foreigner, or a full-pursed mynheer from Amsterdam, sent out on the service of the State? Or, after all, it may be that papa Van Diemen withheld the light of his consenting countenance.

"The instructions furnished to Captain Tasman before his little fleet of three vessels sailed are preserved, and wonderfully do they illustrate the cold practicality of the phlegmatic Dutchmen, who never

seem to have regarded their intrepid navigators as anything more than machines. Tasman, like the rest, was the reverse of a free rover. He was to affix the sign manual of the company upon trees and rocks; to trade with the natives, but keep them ignorant of the value of the precious metals; to make treaties giving the Dutch a monopoly of everything. His course was minutely mapped out. He was to find out whether New Guinea was divided from the great south continent; if so, to sail round the latter. Under certain conditions, he was to complete the circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land.

"With these instructions Tasman sailed, and there we must leave him. The private journal of his first voyage fell by accident into the hands of an historian, though some authorities consider even that narrative open to suspicion. Any memoir of the second voyage is too fragmentary to give complete or reliable information upon its results. The Dutch, no doubt, according to their custom, destroyed logs, maps, and journals in their jealousy and greed.

"In one history, and one alone, I read that Tasman and Maria van Diemen were married, as poetic justice indeed requires; and who shall doubt that in the end, after striving so persistently for the prize, Abel Jansen Tasman was rewarded by the hand of her who had long occupied his thoughts, and, in the good old fashion, lived happily ever afterwards?"

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE MIDLANDS.

Ousebridge a centre of operations—A sporting quartette—A many-sided coachman—Scotch nomenclature—The river Ouse—A churlish proprietor—His honour sits down before the enemy—Bothwell and Melton Mowbray—The river Jordan—A costly conflagration—The lakes—Wind by measure.

FROM this date we apply ourselves to pleasure in a most business-like manner, working hard at the water-side, and travelling hard also, sometimes, as we moved from place to place. In the remote districts locomotion is one of the difficulties the visitor to Tasmania has to face, especially at harvest-time, when every horse and cart and every spare man will be busy. It was suggested to us that the most satisfactory plan for sportsmen would be to purchase a couple of saddle-horses, and perhaps a pack-horse, and include a tent in our kit; and subsequently, more than once, we regret that we have not taken this advice.

There is no difficulty of access, however, to the next centre of operations, namely, Ousebridge, in the midlands. The distance is but thirty-two miles, and we catch the coach to the village through which runs the river which gives it a name. We are at once in con-

genial society. A couple of creels and some fishing rods strapped together are conspicuous amongst the luggage on the pavement at the coach office. These articles would in any part of the globe be sufficient warrant of introduction to the owners—the one a judge from Victoria, the other a minor legal luminary from Melbourne—both Irishmen, both full of anecdote and wit, both ardent sportsmen. We four anglers are drawn together by the natural law of gravitation, and have not been seated in the coach—a singular tilted conveyance, enclosed with leather curtains—five minutes before we are in familiar converse, exchanging notes, theories, and records, examining each other's flies, and deep in angling lore. The journey lasts from eleven o'clock till five in the afternoon; but diverge, as the conversation naturally will, now and then to foreign topics, it never fails to veer round to the one well-beloved subject. The judge and his friend tramp mountain and bog and shoot their birds and slay their salmon over again; and I maintain the honour of English trout streams with unflagging patriotism.

The coachman is one of those "characters" to be found somewhat plentifully in all the colonies, and has been for many years the oracle of the road from Hobart Town upwards. His great forte is being all things to all men. He is extremely affable to a reverend gentleman on the front seat, and with him discusses modern hymnology with much unction and knowledge. A jolly-faced settler on the second cross-seat solicits his advice respecting cropping, and receives an eloquent lecture on the evils of the sweating of land to which, he avers, Tasmanian proprietors are abominably addicted. Equally learned is he to a nursing mother, whom he advises upon the subject of rearing infants

by bottle. But we sportsmen are the "fares" of whom he is most proud; he does not rest until he has, by adroitly rearranging the seats, got us four within tongue-shot, and he soon proves that he can talk with the Irish gentlemen either of Ballina or Glendalough, and with myself of all the noted English and Welsh streams. His knowledge is amazing.

"Between ourselves, as sportsmen," he says, by-and-by, with a confidential wink, "I wouldn't put too much faith in that paragraph."

We, who have been many days outside newspaper circulation, are not cognizant of a paragraph likely to make extra demands upon our faith. Jehu, however, draws from underneath his cushion a soiled copy of this morning's newspaper, in which it is stated that miraculous sport has lately been enjoyed by anglers in the Ouse; that an average of from twenty to thirty trout, varying from three to eight pounds, has been made daily; that anglers from all parts of Australia are on the spot, partaking in the grand good fortune.

It is kind of the coachman to warn us. He naturally expects that the appearance of four passengers with angling equipments is due entirely to this glowing description, though, as a matter of fact, our meeting is an accident; and an artful cross-examination of him by the legal luminaries from Victoria yields *prima facie* evidence that parties interested in conveying innocent anglers to the Ouse, and entertaining them for a consideration while they are there, have imposed this outrageous paragraph upon the Hobart Town editor. It turns out to be the purest, or rather impurest fiction, and it may be that Jehu's warning is prompted by a reminder from his own conscience of the share he himself has had in the transaction.

The six hours' drive is a merry one, though the rough roads make the pace slow. The Irish gentlemen know the island well, having for some time been in the habit of spending their summer vacations here, and as one is a naturalist and the other a geologist, and both are acquainted with the history of every tract of country we pass through, a warp of information is mingled with the woof of wit and anecdote.

The country is the centre of the occupied portions of Tasmania, and most highly cultivated. For many miles the road is almost parallel with the course of the Derwent. The best land in the island was naturally taken up at a very early period, and between New Norfolk and Ousebridge you see some of the best. Probably one-third of Tasmania remains to this day practically unknown, and there are fair grounds for supposing that rich mineral resources remain to be developed.

We traverse the boundary between the counties of Buckingham and Monmouth, and get up to the plateau which constitutes the famous lake district. At Hamilton, at the junction of the Clyde and Ouse, we enter the county of Cumberland, which has been truly described as a vast sheepwalk, the pasture lands in the lake district further north being of great extent, level and marshy. How this estate was in litigation; how that run, in the convict days when Government money was the Tasmanian bread of life, was obtained for next to nothing; how the fine pastoral country upon the plateau to which the lowland sheep-owners send their flocks after the midsummer shearings ought to be drained, and might be drained—these matters are explained and commented upon.

The judge has a good eye for the prime merino sheep

at rest in their mid-day camps; his friend expatiates upon the good points of the Durham cattle; I admire the snug homesteads and park-like landscape; the Major discovers in the nomenclature of the country what he is pleased to term an appalling preponderance of Scotch. Hamilton and Gretna Green are the names of two halting-places; and the estates in the neighbourhood, like the speech of some of the inhabitants, have the true North Britain ring.

The Scotch settlers—and the world does not require to be informed that men of that nation make the best of colonists—had something to do with that remarkable emigation from Van Diemen's Land in the early portion of its settlement when a determined effort was made to found a new country in Australia Felix. The little enterprise was projected under cover of a scheme to *civilize the natives of Port Phillip.* In the good cause of philanthropy certain gentlemen managed to get from the poor aboriginals an immense quantity of land, which they appropriated. The history of this episode of colonial enterprise is not happy, though the doings of the Van Diemen's Land Association with the aboriginals of Port Phillip but truly represent the sharp practices which have too often attended colonization.

This subject is debated in a very lively manner for two hours in the Ousebridge stage-coach, the settler before referred to having inherited from his father, who was "in" the scheme, numerous particulars which enable him, by associating living people with the business in which their forefathers had a share, to infuse into it a delicious personal element, strongly tinctured with scandal.

The inn at which we are deposited is the last to be found in that direction. The river Ouse rolls deep

under a bridge close to the village, and beyond it the traveller encounters rugged mountains with snow-covered peaks, heavily timbered hill and valley, but a sparse population, and not a hostelry between Ousebridge and the terrible coast beyond the Frenchman's Cap, an abrupt mountain summit 4750 feet high. At this *ultima thule* the party of sportsmen obtain comfortable quarters; also find the serjeant-at-arms of one of the colonial legislatures almost dying of *ennui*—for he is not an angler. For more than a week he has been the sole occupant of the coffee-room, and on the arrival of our coach he is so gladdened at the sight of such congenial companions, that, taking down his neglected breech-loader, he goes out with half a dozen cartridges, and in less than an hour returns with half a dozen rabbits, beautifully killed—as he, a loyal parliamentary officer, explains over the dinner table—on true constitutional principles.

Three or four days at Ousebridge suffice. The weather sets in hot and dry, and nothing less than a good scouring flood can improve the fishing. As a rule the occupiers freely give strangers permission to walk over their land, and, as a matter of courtesy, we scrupulously keep up the duty of asking leave. To our mingled amazement and amusement, at Ousebridge we are refused by a churlish gentleman, who demands credentials, and asks so many impertinent questions, that we leave him in disgust. The visitor to Tasmania, however, will find this treatment the rarest exception. And the refusal does not prevent us from fishing the water from the further bank, over which he has no territorial rights.

The Ouse is, in some respects and in some sections of its course, not unlike its great namesake in the mid-

lands at home, being sober in demeanour, portly of volume, and practical in the various uses to which it is applied by the dwellers upon its banks. The bed, however, is not soft, but rocky, and both above and below Ousebridge there are many brilliant exceptions to the common pace at which it flows along. The Dee is a charming little tributary, reached by means of a spring cart jolting over seven miles of extremely rough bush road. It is a mountain stream, and gives fair sport even with an artificial fly; it has, moreover, the additional recommendation of occasional clearings on the banks.

The judge, after a while, pronounces himself too old a bird to be caught by chaff; in other words, after careful observation, he arrives at the conclusion that, at his time of life, climbing fences, scaling embankments, clambering over logs, and battling through scrub and bush is only to be undertaken when there is reasonable prospect of tangible reward.

"It is only a reasonable prospect I require," he says, "to bring me out with you, but the prospect here at the present time is a blank one; everything is against us."

His honour, too, practises what he preaches, for while the others are fatiguing themselves by prolonged exertions he saunters out with his rod, and following a track through the furze worn by local anglers, legitimate and otherwise, sits him down on a point of land commanding a likely eddy. From this spot he arrives at breakfast on the second morning, blandly smiling, and offering the encouraging statement that he has risen and actually pricked a pound trout. Knives and forks cease at this portentous intelligence, and the judge adds the assurance that while his friends whip

the water up and down he will stick to his position until the enemy capitulates. At luncheon, all meeting at table, and all having returned with empty baskets, he announces that the fish has risen twice again, the first time short, and the second time near enough to be once more touched. The council-general of anglers, over their raspberries and cream, quote numerous authorities to prove that by all the rules of the game this pricked trout would not, and could not, be bamboozled again, at least during the remainder of the day; but the judge, immediately luncheon is done, returns confident to his post. At dinner his chair is vacant when the cover is taken off the soup tureen, and nightfall having arrived, and no judge, some little alarm is felt. But a grave yet triumphant footstep is heard in the passage, the door is opened with a flourish, and behold the judge, radiant and contented, in the doorway, holding up at arm's length the identical fish, he swears, to which he has laid siege for twelve hours and a half.

As we four anglers between us have only taken this single specimen to-day, we resolve to shift camp without more delay than the necessities of coaching require, and when we call for our bill, which, like all the bills presented by the country innkeepers, is extremely moderate, we find that the landlord, as a short cut out of a difficulty, has made it out in the name of "Judge and Company." As Judge and Co. we accordingly drink to our next merry meeting, and go our several ways.

Then we journey to Bothwell, where, to be strictly accurate, the Tasmanian midlands commence. This is probably the most popular resort of angling visitors, and as a consequence the water in the immediate

vicinity has been pretty well punished, as we are not long in discovering. There are a couple of Queensland friends, however, to hunt up, and plenty of occupation for at least a week. As the crow flies the distance hence to Ousebridge is not great, but it is found most convenient to take coach to Hobart Town, thence to Melton Mowbray. The grass has now become almost as yellow as the wheat and barley into which, right and left, the reaping hooks are being thrust, and the freshness of the outlook has been sadly marred by drought. Travelling, however, with the harvesters busy around, continues to be most enjoyable; the fields through which the rivers flow are always a bright green, and the prospect is often varied by the thick ranks of pollard willows marking the course of the streams.

Melton Mowbray has some—or had some—pretensions to a sporting reputation, as becomes a neighbourhood which has assumed the name of the metropolis of English fox-hunting. In days not far remote, red-coated horsemen and eager hounds met at the Tasmanian Melton also, but the gallant Nimrods could not get over the primal difficulty that there was little to hunt. Rabbits have multiplied excessively in the island, until they are shot down as vermin, but the members of a hunt club cannot raise the view-halloo at a coney. Hares do not breed well as yet, and if they did the country is not favourable for coursing. Foxes, of course, do not exist, and are not required. There are a few deer in the mountains, however, and a few kangaroos. In Australia kangaroos have become so numerous that special legislation is invoked to their destruction; in Tasmania the few animals which remain are carefully preserved for sport.

Having a few hours to spare at Melton, having enjoyed the plain abundance of the inn table, having resumed acquaintance with the coloured hunting pictures on the walls, and having engaged as guide the services of a blacksmith's boy, who is found beguiling his time by firing with a rusty old fowling-piece at a bottle on the gate, we go at eventide to fish the river Jordan.

There is a great richness of poetical association about many of the old Bible names; they fix in the youthful mind certain impressions which never wholly wear away. With Hermon we thus associate the balmy dew of morning; with Lebanon, cedars comely and strong; with the Jordan, milk and honey, pomegranates, figs, and olives. A visit to Palestine may show that many of those youthful impressions are based upon nothing more substantial than imagination—upon the poet's fervour and the painter's fancy; but we are all familiar with them.

Hence, as we follow the guide over fences and fields, I suggest, "Somehow in the word Jordan there is always the ripple and flow of a pleasant stream."

"My dear sir," says the Major, "I really can't afford to be sentimental this evening. It is bitterly cold. One of the Puritan divines said that a sinner with cold feet had a very poor chance of conversion even under the most powerful ministrations. That remark showed a deep insight into human nature. The Jews approached Jordan and spoke of it with delight and veneration: to me, just at present, the name——"

"Doesn't it strike you, my dear fellow, that it is a trifle irreverent to jest with sacred subjects in this way?"

"It does not," he answers, thrusting his hands into

his pockets to keep them warm. "To begin with, I did not christen this stream; nextly, I object to your classing mere historical facts with the things you term specially sacred; lastly, I jested not, for it is as cold as treble X. charity."

The weather has, in truth, suddenly changed. There are hard-hearted clouds over the mountains, like steel-tinted masses of cotton wool entangled in the tops of the forest trees. A wind of true nor'-easter pattern blows across the flats.

"How much farther, my lad?" I inquire.

The horny-handed young vulcan—who has been for some minutes looking inquiringly into our faces, as who would say, "Now then, gentlemen, wake up! wake up!"—demands a little more explanation as to "farther."

"Where is the Jordan? How far to the Jordan? This is what we want to know!" says the Major, impetuously.

"Why," answers the boy, with a grin, "we've bin a-crossin' and recrossin' the Joreding ever so long."

"What!" I exclaim. "Do you mean to tell me that this wretched chain of stagnant puddles that we have been stepping over dryshod is the Jordan?"

"Yes, what is left of it. It's a pretty tidy river, though, is the Joreding, in flood-time," adds the blacksmith.

Doubtless this is a reasonable explanation, but after our critical conversation upon Old Testament names we are disgusted at the rude breaking up of our castle of metaphor and imagery. A smoke and chat around a roaring fire in the wide inn room, into which the passengers by the night mail, about ten o'clock, come with blue noses and wrinkled brows, exercises a soothing

effect, however, and sends us to the huge four-post bedsteads in a self-satisfied frame of mind.

The next morning, which is abnormally bleak, we start once more, "per coach," for Bothwell. During the first three or four miles we extend our acquaintance with the Jordan. From the driver we learn that there are *bonâ fide* trout in it, and that when the conditions of earth and air are favourable it is a brisk little brook. An iron-bark is pointed out under which a boy hooked and hauled a nine-pounder two months previously. The pebbly bed is now, however, very dry, and we can look upon the Jordan only with the eye of faith.

The twelve miles' journey takes us into higher and colder country. On the way we pass a splendid piece of rich soil lowland, called the Black Marsh, a large oval plain covered with grain, over which roam the shadows of the clouds overhead, and the fitful undulations caused by the gusts from the surrounding hills. Since yesterday the dominating summit of one of the distant ranges has put on a clean white nightcap of snow. That is one novelty. The fallows and fields show a plenteous crop of Californian thistles, and this is another.

A mile or two outside of the township of Bothwell is a man, apparently a mariner, resting on his travels to boil his mid-day tea. His pack is by his side, and in the fork of a fallen tree he has kindled a fire. This, the reader may think, is a very trivial incident. It is associated, nevertheless, with anything but trivial consequences. The lighting of that fire by the pedestrian costs the Bothwell farmers some hundreds of pounds. The dry weather has lasted too long; and the fences, which are generally of logs, are like matchwood. A single spark under such circumstances produces a con-

flagration; and this is what speedily follows the boiling of the wayfarer's mid-day tea.

We have inspected and chosen our bedrooms, and are thinking of luncheon, when an outcry in the village street draws us forth. Dense white smoke is seen afar, curling upward and driving horizontally before the wind. Then there is mounting in hot haste. Every horse that can be caught, borrowed, or seized is speedily bearing men at full gallop, armed with axes, to save the threatened fencing. The shopkeepers, innkeepers, servant girls, rush at top speed towards the fire, the alarming nature of which has been communicated by a passing horseman. We hurry away with the rest, and assist in pulling down the fences in order to cut off the train of fire and in stamping out the mischief wherever it can be done. Sometimes, with a roar and crackle, the flames run along the fence, licking the dry logs with their yellow enveloping tongues, and consuming yards of solid barrier with terrible swiftness. By herculean labour on the part of the volunteers the worst of the fire is stamped out during the afternoon, but for days afterwards stray sparks produce new fires, and at night-time the sky is lurid with the reflection. What trouble and loss a moment's carelessness causes! The pedestrian who looks like a mariner is sought after far and near, but he is wise enough to abscond before the irate farming people are upon him.

Bothwell is a favourite haunt of angling tourists. The river Clyde runs through it—a narrow chalk-stained stream, with open banks. Within easy reach is the Shannon, a clear, rapid, handsome river, which, carefully fished, produces sport second to none in Tasmania.

The friends we visit are found engaged in a pursuit

which amusingly illustrates the peculiarities of Tasmanian angling. They are descried in a distant field, with head and hands lowered, as if holding a plough; this, however, cannot be, since they are running steadily, and at a good pace about the field. A nearer view shows that, instead of guiding a plough, they hold a long-handled butterfly net near the ground, and run sometimes straight, sometimes zigzag, and sometimes in a circle. It occurs to me at first that, in despair because sport is bad (for they too are anglers), they have invented some hitherto unheard-of description of race, and are in training for it. The mystery is eventually solved. The gentlemen are catching grasshoppers for bait, and they dolefully tell us, by-and-by, that hunting grasshoppers in the open fields and stalking locusts by the hedge are the chief, and not unfrequently the most exciting, phases of trout-fishing at Bothwell. The grasshoppers at this time cover the ground in myriads, and every strong gust of wind blows them like a heavy shower of snowflakes upon the water. Small chance, indeed, for sportsmen, when the fish have only to open their mouths to be filled.

A trip to the great lakes is undertaken; it is a three days' expedition over extremely rough road. A few trout are killed at the mouth of the Shannon; a large fish of eleven pounds is shot by one of the attendants; and a miscellaneous bag is made of rabbits, golden plover, snipe, swan, duck, and quail. After our return to Bothwell, the continued cold puts an end to all kinds of sport during the remainder of our stay, and we leave the midlands in the midst of a terrific storm of wind and hail by which the mountains are hidden and the travellers half blinded.

"Aha!" quoth the Major, "you rebuked me the

other day for what you termed jesting upon sacred subjects; but I can't help recalling a remark of George Herbert, who said, in his quaint way, that to a close-shorn sheep God gives wind by measure. Now, I don't dispute the assertion; only, if you will look at those merinos yonder, you must feel with me that they find it uncommonly full measure."

CHAPTER XIII.

SUMMING UP.

Fish slain—Character, moral and otherwise, of the Tasmanian trout—Fishing under difficulties—General conclusion.

PERHAPS my ill luck does not particularly qualify me to do justice to the angling capabilities of Tasmania. After the Major and I part company—as we do, let it be hoped, with mutual regret—I rub my ideas against those of capable fishing men who know the Tasmanian waters, and am convinced that fortune has been against me throughout. Even so, my angling expedition has not (as such) been a failure. Without fishing half as much as I might have done, had other things not claimed my attention, I have killed fifty-four trout, representing, perhaps, certainly not more than twenty outings with my rod. That is not much, you will say; but I humbly submit it is something, especially as for a long time I could not bring myself to use grasshoppers or locusts. And I say nothing of the tench and perch fishing, which was very good.

Whether a fish has any moral nature or not, I leave more experienced judges to decide; the Tasmanian trout, however, I am inclined to fear, is, by comparison with his ancestors in the old country, a degenerate

individual. If, in the subaqueous caverns, arbours, drawing-rooms or galleries to which this colonial generation of trout, at those times when they, mysteriously disappearing from human ken, retires for contemplation or repose, there are family portraits hung upon the walls, as in feudal castles and baronial halls, the young fry may look upon those pictures and upon themselves with the self-satisfaction that in outward appearance they may bear favourable comparison with the best of them. The ruby jewelling and bright burnishing of the vestments, and the portliness of form, are there; nay, there is every reason to suppose that of two members of the same trout family—one, let us say, in the Kennet, the other in the Tasmanian Derwent—the colonial shall be longer, broader, thicker, and vastly heavier than the other. But in all other forms of comparison the colonial must hide his head.

Imprimis, what think you of a trout that rarely rises at a fly? It was repeated to me often that in the early part of the season an artificial fly may be used with moderate success, and also very late in the season. It is my misfortune to have arrived in Tasmania late in the middle of the season, and I have tried every possible device, every fly, great and small, sober and gay, with miserable results. The larger fish are to be taken with spinning flights, as we used to do at home for pike, or with coarse worms, grubs, moths, and grasshoppers. For a time I could not understand this. Trout-fishing to me always meant fly-fishing.

At Hobart Town, before going inland, I am directed to a person who is said to be the crack angler of the island; and if successful pot-hunting be a standard he should stand high, though a blacksmith I wot of up country would beat him on his own ground. This

person, in that disagreeable spirit which you find in the pot-hunting cockney at home, pretends to be very wise and learned, but carefully avoids telling us how or where to fish, and as we come upon his tracks afterwards, we discover that he has his own personal reasons for working on the secret principle.

I purchase a quantity of flies in the island, mostly large and coarsely made. The casts that are sold to local fishermen are of the strongest character. The plan is to use a large hook, or triangle of hooks, and having attached worms or insects, in bulk total exceeding the size of a walnut, to allow it to wobble down with the stream. You feel your fish, and strike him; then, however large he may be, haul him out bodily. That is the way a great many local people fish in Tasmania. At first I have no conception that trout-fishing is conducted on this principle, and for a long while determine to stick to my light rod, fine tackle, and artificial flies. But eventually, in self-defence, I am obliged to come down to the Tasmanian level.

I will not deny that it is a necessity. During the best months of the season the streams are literally gorged with insects, larger, fatter, and no doubt more toothsome than the gauze-winged little sham creatures of the other side of the world. Naturally the trout are gorged too. You must meet them, therefore, with their own arguments, and deal with them precisely as the Nottingham fisherman deals with chub; only without a float. Perhaps it would be more correct to say you should practise the process which in the west-country grayling rivers is known as sinking and drawing.

One sign of the degeneration to which I have

referred is even stronger than the disinclination to take the artificial fly; I refer to the poor spirit the fish exhibits when hooked. At home nothing can be more exciting than the play of a trout. He is here, there, and everywhere; he doubles, rushes, leaps, flies; he takes advantage of the least slackening of the line, and will twist himself free if one muscle of your wrist fail in its duty. He espies every vantage ground, and fights his way towards it dashingly. So long as he has a fin free to wave he knows not defeat. Which means this: you have a foeman worthy of your steel.

One night at Ousebridge, in the gloaming, by employing a large white moth of Worcestershire make, I hook a fish of two pounds or thereabout, and the caitiff, after one feeble run that would have disgraced a Colne dace, succumbs, and comes in on his side with never a plunge or wriggle. My friend the blacksmith informs me that it is necessary to haul in Tasmanian fish by sheer force because of the sunken logs. I myself have paid for my experience of logs. These submerged tree trunks, I make no doubt, afford both food and shelter to the trout—shelter, assuredly. When struck, the fish, if aged, gives one rush, and always for the nearest log. We know what that signifies: it signifies that ere long you are left lamenting.

There are, one cannot remember too frequently, exceptions to every rule; but I fancy the Tasmanian trout, as a rule, have lost their gentlemanly delicacy of appetite, and have lost also their gamesome mettle. To these counts I must add a third clause in the indictment, which, if well grounded, is the crowning evidence of degeneracy; they are rough and muddy-flavoured for table purposes. That is my experience.

Having, to this extent, abused the Tasmanian trout, I will now proceed to praise him. After the indifferent angling I have experienced in Queensland, it is a happy moment for me when the sight of a speckled trout once more gladdens my eyes. True, before I get back to my Queensland home, I shall have travelled some three thousand miles chiefly for the pleasure; and herein, having had no premonition of degeneracy, lays perhaps the disappointment I have outshadowed at finding that an old acquaintance, and a valued one, has lost caste. It may be, on the other hand, that I exaggerate the defects; it may be that another visit to Tasmania would reverse all my opinions; it may be that I am myself a bungler, who, if he ever knew aught of the gentle art, has lost skill by long contact with deep-sea lines and coarse fish.

But you have in the island lovely streams well stocked with trout. The trout are there. Whether you will make good baskets is another matter. From what I have seen and heard good baskets are rare. I have met two gentlemen who fished the Tasmanian streams for three months and caught fifteen fish. But they were all large fish—two, three, and four pounds—all caught with some coarse kind of bait. To be sure I cannot supplement this statement with information as to how these anglers went to work.

An immense drawback to strangers like myself, accustomed to the open waters of home, is the dense undergrowth along the banks of the rivers. Only here and there can you get near the water. In some places there are three or four points, perhaps, in as many miles, and you will find little paths worn down to them, showing that the pot-hunters from the townships

repair thither with their night-lines, clothes-props, whipcord, and the rest. The Tasmanian streams are protected, so far as the Government can protect them, by the imposition of a fishing license; but in the country districts the only real protection is the law against trespassing enforced by the landowners. Generally speaking the occupiers of land are glad to give permission to fish, but if ever a salmon fishery that will pay is developed, funds should be at once devoted to the prevention of poaching, and of nefarious styles of fishing that are virtually no better than poaching.

After solemnly accusing the trout of the Tasmanian streams of inability to appreciate the artificial fly, the reader is at liberty to smile on reading the following description of the best bit of sport I have enjoyed; and it was certainly good. For two days I whipped a river which I believed to be overfished. At any rate, with the exception of an odd trout or so, I toiled hard and caught nothing. Then I inquired and investigated, until I heard of a region miles distant, where probably not half a dozen anglers had been. I got a guide and walked over mountain and bush thither. There was nothing for it but wading (and let me tell you, parenthetically, wading is indispensable in Tasmania). I could see through the trees densely fringing the river that it was a magnificent trout stream—amber tinted, with bouldery beds, and every variety of water.

But the density of the undergrowth, the steepness of the banks, and the caution necessary to avoid snakes, gave me an hour's hard work before I could gain the stream, which strongly resembled the Devonshire Tamar at the reaches above the Duke of Bedford's

place at Endsleigh. I tried March brown, black gnat, red spinner, blue dun, governor, wren-tail, hare's-ear, coch-a-bondu, yellow sally, sandfly, alder. At last I found a well-worn, small coachman, with a little gold twist round the body, and soon cried "Eureka!"

Wading up stream, under shadow of the trees and bushes, and using a short line, by sunset I had nine brace of beautiful little trout between half a pound and a pound safe in my basket. They were picked out from close under the bank, and it was the severest toil I ever experienced. Most of the casts were underhanded; submerged logs had continually to be clambered or tumbled over; and finally came a long walk in the dark over broken hilly bush. When I reached home, beaten and aching, I felt that the game was scarcely worth the candle; but it was good fun while it lasted, though, from the ejaculations uttered on the production of the fish on a tray, I suspect it was an extraordinary stroke of fortune.

To sum up: the larger streams must be fished from coracle or boat, which the angler should bring for himself; the smaller ones must be waded; the difficulties are as numerous as they can be, but the trout are real and plentiful.

If the country were more cleared, and the river banks more open; if the authorities looked more sharply after poachers, and prohibited unsportsmanlike methods of capture, sport in Tasmania would be good. Perhaps this will come in time. The Government and Salmon Commissioners have already achieved wonders, and should the salmon take the form of a payable export to Melbourne and Sydney they will in some measure be repaid for their perseverance. Pleasant indeed will my memories ever be of Derwent and its

hop-fields, Clyde, Shannon, Jordan, Nile, Dee, South and North Esk, Plenty, Lachlan, St. Patrick, Ouse, and many another joyous river, and of the genial brethren of the angle whose acquaintanceship I made on coach, in rough cart, in the saddle, in the stream, and at the homely hostelry when day was done. But I must still swear by the British Islands, with all their overfishing and curtailed privileges to the angler, as the finest angling ground in the world. I am told that better will come to my share, by-and-by, in Canada and the States, and if the promise be fulfilled I will acknowledge it to the full.

PART II.

TRAVEL AND TROUT:
NEW ZEALAND.

CHAPTER I.

WEST TO EAST.

Trout hunger again—New Zealand beckons—The yellow agony—A proper berth companion—Hot to cold by easy stages—Sketches, not guide-book—Albatross or mollyauk—A ship library—North Cape—New Zealand not Australia—Bay of Islands—A change indeed—Coal and coaling—New Zealand coasting—Auckland harbour.

THE old trout hunger came upon me again two years after my Tasmanian trip. The memories of it had lasted me, eked out as they were, until they became threadbare. Then New Zealand beckoned me on another journey, also of, in round figures, another four thousand miles. The attractions offered were reputed trout, new scenery, and an escape from two months of hot weather. I gathered together the same rod, creel, and fly-books, and went out with an eagerness in the matter of sport that had become rampant, half-starved as it was by long feeding upon expectations.

The people of Sydney and Brisbane were just then suffering the early symptoms of the yellow agony. The white seamen struck because some of the steam companies employed Chinese, who make the best of ship stewards, and who at cheap rates do seaman's duty with an obedience foreign to the European. An enormous amount of wild speech and writing flooded

the country. Awful warnings were uttered, and white blackguards, the Chinaman's meekness under blows being well known, committed dastardly assaults upon the hated Mongolian. It was a burning question at that time; it will be a burning question again some day, in colonies where labour is a crying necessity. It is mentioned here, not for discussion or comment, but to give opportunity for the statement that it threatened seriously to interrupt communication between the ports of Australia.

When I started upon my voyage across the South Pacific, the difficulties under which the coastal traffic of Queensland was being conducted occupied the public mind to an enormous extent, so that, just as in ancient days all roads converged to Rome, every topic upon which tongue or pen touched naturally hovered around or plunged into the great Chinese question. The storm expended itself in due time, as all storms happily do in this world, though they be hurricane, cyclone, or typhoon. The strange experience through which we were passing, at any rate, had one effect. It convinced the travelling public that, after all, the Australian coasting steamships had been, in certain respects, good servants to the public; they had given fairly good accommodation. The public grumbled, fumed, and fretted when well off. Like Jeshurun, waxing fat, they needs must kick. It does not say much for our common sense, perhaps, or patience, but certain it is that one-half of us do not know the value of our advantages till we lose them; thus Australian travellers by the odds and ends of craft with which some of them had to be content, until the famous strike ended in mutual concession, sighed for the comforts of yore.

Under ordinary circumstances, the reader will already

have understood, the voyage from Brisbane to Sydney is an agreeable little trip—neither too long nor too short; provided two things, namely, that you have a proper berth companion and proper weather. In both was I fortunate. The doctor, who for two nights was to dream four feet above me, could not, in truth, be said to be otherwise than proper. He was commended to my care by a couple of eminent Brisbane gentlemen who accompanied him to the mouth of the river, and I found him worthy of the high character they had given him. He never got sea-sick, slept without snoring, stepped into and out of his berth with an apology as soft as his footfall, and was ready at any hour of the day or night, by the binnacle or in the maintop, stem or stern, sitting or walking, to discuss law or gospel, physic or any other form of kill and cure, gold mining or sugar growing, horse breeding or acrostic writing; and he was mighty on theology. What say you, then, to him as a proper berth companion? And the weather was of the finest—not rough enough for fiddles on the saloon table, but rough enough to despatch a reasonable percentage of passengers to the retirement of their cabins and the mercies of the stewards. And long before breakfast on the morning of the third day we were passing between Sydney Heads, deploring the mists which veiled the glories of the harbour from our eyes. It is always a slice of unmitigated bad luck to find this—one of the famous sights of the world—jealously screened off from view.

The artist in hair, if he knows his business at the shampooing apparatus, will never shock his victim by a sudden douche of cold water, but will harmoniously intermingle the two streams, "leading up" (as the lawyers say) in persuasive and imperceptible flow to the grand

final sensation. Wherefore, if the reader projects a trip to New Zealand in search of coolness and mental and physical bracing up, let him—be he from a hotter country—take Auckland as a starting-point, in order that by the time he arrives in Otago he may have been passed on from hot to cold by easy stages. On my way across the ocean from Sydney, the Surveyor-General of New Zealand, returning from a year's spell in the old country, gave me much interesting information respecting the country with which he has been associated from its infancy. One similitude of his struck me. He described the extreme north of New Zealand as resembling Spain, the middle as resembling France, and the southern as resembling England and Scotland; and this, I may at once premise, will prove to be an illustration as accurate as it is happy. It, therefore, stands to reason that the half-baked visitor, in carrying out the crescendo movement here recommended, should, if possible, cross from Sydney to Auckland rather than from Sydney to Wellington, work his way southward, and return *viâ* Melbourne.

It will be but fair thus early to warn the reader that these sketches are fragmentary. I had a limited amount of time for holiday making—had, in fine, to cut the garment according to the cloth. It was impossible to go everywhere, or do everything, and I did what I could. He who expects from me, let us say, a treatise on the land laws of New Zealand will therefore be disappointed. I heard a great deal about them, I confess, the result being that what little I did before know of the complicated systems in vogue became hopeless chaos. I dare say the New Zealanders understand them themselves, though once or twice I dared to entertain doubts upon the point. Nor shall

I interfere with the legitimate guide-book business. Over four hundred, and most likely over five hundred books, great and small, have been written upon New Zealand; consequently, if every reader of these sketches be not proficient in the history, physical geography, natural and artificial capabilities, statistics, and government of that colony, the fault is not mine. The assumption that these four or five hundred publications have made New Zealand familiar will save me much trouble. At any rate, I leave them to supply all the information that is required as to mileage, acreage, births, deaths, marriages, and other products. Such information is fully given, and with as much accuracy as is necessary for general purposes.

The four days and a half voyaging across the blue Pacific were a luxury. Some persons hate the sea with a bitter hatred; they fear, dread, and loathe it. I have seen big, burly, rich, handsome men laid low and limp in an hour, while feeble folk like myself, neither big, burly, handsome, nor rich, looked down upon them with wondering pity. These unfortunates have my sympathy, and it is in no spirit of selfishness that I recall this luxurious lounge of 1277 miles from west to east. The *Rotorua* was, and I trust still is, a fine ship, with a most genial commander and attentive stewards, with a nice little library beyond the transoms, a good bath-room amidships, a snug smoking-room on deck, and with a substantially furnished saloon table; but—sole drawback—with four-berth cabins instead of two. However, one cannot expect perfection in the colonies, though I know of some steam vessels endured by the British public which for comfort should not be mentioned in the same breath as these colonial boats. The days seemed to glide by, each more dreamy

and refreshing than the other. They say with much truth that life on board ship brings out all the bad qualities of human nature, and by that token we must have been a remarkably amiable set of people, for the sun above us appeared to be closely typical of the brightness of our own spirits.

All things considered, one meets with very little incident in modern ocean travelling. With the exception of the San Francisco mail steamer, which passed by at a distance on the evening of the second day, we saw no sign of human life outside of our own vessel. We looked in vain for the white gleam of a sail, or the dark trail of a steamer's smoke. Not a porpoise rolled upon the surface. Even the birds were few until we neared the New Zealand coast. One entire day a group of gentlemen discussed some dozen birds that followed the steamer. What were they? Opinions were equally divided. There was an albatross faction and a mollyauk faction, and it was not until, towards the close of the voyage, some unmistakable albatrosses soared and wheeled majestically amongst the smaller fowl that the error of the first-named faction was apparent. The one bird is, indeed, often mistaken for the other in these waters. The wandering albatross is not only not found north of the Equator, but seldom so far north as the tropic of Capricorn, and the birds seen in this part of the Pacific are generally not the albatross, but the smaller bird, which it so much at a distance resembles. By-and-by we came across numbers of the pretty Cape pigeon (as Australians term it), or Cape petrel, apparently running upon the water in that peculiar fashion of theirs to which they owe the name of *petrel*—a quaint and ancient reminder of their resemblance to Peter, the

fisherman apostle, who also walked upon the waves. But a handful of sea-fowl are not a sensational break in the monotony, and we were thrown back upon sea and sky in the morning, and sky and sea in the afternoon—the sky without a cloud; the sea as deeply, darkly, beautifully blue as even a Byron, our most enthusiastic and truest poet of the sea, could wish.

What a godsend, under these circumstances, was that library of light literature! At a time like this one actually enjoys the veriest trash of the circulating library. Why should not all coasting steamers have their little libraries? On the *Rotorua*, and possibly on other of the Union Company's steamers, the passenger, upon his first application for a volume, pays a shilling to the steward who has charge of the bookcase, and that reasonable fee will cover the whole voyage. It so happened that I returned by the *Rotorua*, after I had done with holidaying, and for my two shillings—a shilling each way—I devoured, read, or skimmed thirty-one books. On those two trips, so far as I could compute, eighty shillings were paid by passengers in library fees. It is obvious that, if properly managed, four pounds will purchase a goodly number of miscellaneous works. The primary outlay upon a modest library of this kind—upon its nucleus certainly—would soon be repaid, and the comfort of the passengers increased; always, of course, assuming that the directors of steam companies deem the comfort of passengers in small matters a consideration worth entertaining.

Day by day progressing eastward, the air grew colder, and on the third day I could wear and appreciate an overcoat. The weather was fortunately all that one could desire, thanks to the earliness of the season. Along the parallel of latitude 35°, which pretty

generally marked our course, it would be naturally hot at midsummer, but from the beginning of October to the end of January the voyage between the two colonies is expected to be quite calm throughout. The *Rotorua* had steamed out of Sydney Heads at dusk on Wednesday. On Sunday afternoon, North Cape, like a grey cloud no bigger than a man's hand, rested upon the eastern horizon. It was the first sight of New Zealand. Next morning we were anchored in the Bay of Islands.

Welcome always, as the face of a friend, is the solid earth after a sea trip, though it is but for a few hours that you have lost sight of land. Ay, be it frowning rock or desolate sandhills, the voyager is glad once more to greet mother earth! But the Bay of Islands is neither frowning nor desolate. Coming upon deck at sunrise to discover why the familiar grind of the restless screw had ceased, and, by ceasing, disturbed my rest, I found the good ship anchored and still, in the centre of a land-locked expanse of smooth water. Surely this was a lovely lake into which we had been transported during the night? Fresh young verdure and woods covered the hillsides; ferns and creepers hung gracefully over the edges of the weather-beaten rocks at the water-side; yellow sands fringed the further shore. The sun, gaining power, shone upon houses half concealed amidst the foliage, marking where a township lay at the foot of the hill. There was nothing Australian in the scenery. The first glimpse supplied you at least with this information. Undergrowth there was in abundance, but it was neither bush nor scrub; the tree ferns here and there in the ravines gave it quite a distinctive character; and there was not a gum tree, nor the ghost of one to be seen. The knolls and headlands were "dressed in

living green," and when, in search of oysters, we pulled about by-and-by in a dingy, we discovered that there were apparently lakes within lakes, and that the Bay of Islands was no misnomer. It is, in a word, a right beautiful harbourage.

Forty years ago, the only township worthy of the name that existed in New Zealand was in this bay. The district is historical in the annals of Pakeha settlement. Near the Waitangi Falls the Maoris signed their first treaty of subjection to the British crown. In the church cemetery under the hill was buried not long since the Maori chief Thomas Walker Nene, a noted warrior amongst a race of warriors—no doubt, like the rest of his kin, an orthodox cannibal in his youth, but a convert to Christianity afterwards, and a loyal supporter of the Government through troublous times. Maori custom dictates that the body of a chief must be buried in a secret place known to only a few of his own tribe, but this chief specially desired that in his case the custom should be broken through. Thus it was that Maori and European combined to give Tamati Waka Nene a great public burial, and the Government of New Zealand subsequently built an imposing monument to the memory of a sensible savage and loyal subject.

A change indeed has been wrought during these forty years. The fierce Ngapuhi tribe have adopted civilization in the best sense of the word; once famed far and wide for prowess in battle, they are now distinguished in the arts and pursuits of peace. On the shores of a pretty bay, opposite One-tree Hill Point, you can see a small settlement, whose hotel and store are maintained almost entirely by Maori custom. The present prosperity of the Bay of Islands, however,

centres in its coal mines. The Union Company's steamers coal here, and engineers speak highly of the coal, which is unlimited in quantity, and in great demand at the present time. Thus soon you get an inkling of the spirit of enterprise abroad in New Zealand. Already the coal-field and the bay are being connected by a railway, and a thriving settlement is growing in consequence. It is about ten miles to the collieries, and the first sign of life we have in the light of the dawn is a tug, aptly named the *Black Diamond*, emerging from the haze shrouding a distant inlet, as if she had descended from the mountains. The Government are completing the railway to the water-side, but for the next two years, at the expiration of which time the works are to be finished, the coal must be brought, as it was on this particular morning, in lighters towed by the *Black Diamond*. She had come down the Kawa Kawa (called a river, but really an arm of the sea, like the Parramatta) from the railway, which touches a point six miles distant. The coal, I may add, is highly bituminous; and, the Government having built the railway connecting the river with the colliery, the Bay of Islands Coal Company leased the line at six per cent. It will be some further indication of what is being done in this northern part of New Zealand, not hitherto of much account in the commercial world, if it be added that the collieries are producing 3500 tons of coal per month, yet are failing to meet half the demands made upon them; and that on the north-eastern shore there is a manganese mine, connected with the water by a tramway, whose owners (an English company) had the satisfaction of receiving ten per cent. as their last dividend.

The operation of coaling afforded us ample oppor-

tunity for a run ashore, and for prying about into the affairs of the locality. There are numberless tiny bays and shady coves along the deeply indented shore, and some of the prominent headlands have their histories. Here the early settlers made a stand and gave fierce battle with the natives; there, for a time impregnable, stood the Maori pah, which did not succumb until a vessel of war, flying the English colours, arrived upon the scene. The mists and shadows were soon chased away by the sun, and the full beauty of our land-locked roadstead—seemingly a lake not wider than the Thames at Richmond, and little over a mile long—was revealed. The transhipment of 120 tons of coal was not to be effected in an hour, but the work was done all too soon for those passengers who had been directing their attention to the charms of the Bay of Islands.

The *Rotorua* kept more or less within sight of land during the remainder of the voyage to Auckland—a distance of some 140 miles. How the coasting trade of New Zealand is carried on with so few accidents is something of a mystery. That the local navigators contrive to steer clear of the unlighted rocks and reefs on a coast where the currents are ever variable and strong is highly to their credit. Your ship seems to be perpetually threading her passage amidst islands which vary in size, from pieces of territory many miles in area, to small abrupt crags, rising, wrinkled and worn, steeply out of the bluest water. Yonder, gloomy and grand, with the foam lashing its immovable feet, rose an extinct volcano; ahead, two gigantic cliffs of hoary rock stood sentinel in the deep sea, and between them, so close that from our decks we could, were we so inclined, shoot the sea-fowl on either side, we passed, awed at the massive grandour of the lofty fretted walls;

around and beyond were rocks assuming the shapes of fantastic pyramid, turret, or dome. Stern and wild, doubtless, but grand withal, is this portion of the New Zealand coast, and on moonlight nights the sternness and wildness are softened into the weird glamour of a fairy picture.

The scenery changes, rather perhaps softens, somewhat as you approach Auckland, but it is not a whit less striking, not a whit less deserving of ranking with the beautiful objects of this natural world. Two promontories remind you somewhat of Great and Little Orme's Head, with the little North Welsh watering-place, Llandudno, between; bluff, inlet, beach, far-off mountain, and lesser hill nearer at hand create a wonder within your mind as to which of these many reaches of water is the harbour of Auckland. The fact is, it is all harbour—deep, capacious in extent, and well marked. Into it runs the Thames, which names the rich gold-field of that name, and part and parcel also of the whole is Coromandel harbour, into which passes the trade of that Coromandel gold-field where Captain Cook's party found gold long before Australia, as a home of the precious metal, was heard of. Auckland harbour is indeed another lovely picture, and the Aucklanders do well to challenge comparison, and dare the Sydneyites to grudge it their admiration. There is a North Shore, with its green eminences and small villa residences, under the domination of Flagstaff Hill, and on the other side there are bluffs, bays, slopes, and hills, with Mount Eden tall and stout above them all. These assume different shapes and appear in different combinations (always fair to the eye) as you near the wharf, behind which the town rises, a mass of houses flanked with green foliage.

CHAPTER II.

ROUND ABOUT AUCKLAND.

Rival cities—Cyprus of the Southern Ocean—Sealers and whalers —"The Rogue's March"—A Maori poem—History of Auckland—Suburb *versus* city—Kauri pine and kauri gum—A club window view—A denounced climate—A spring carnival —Mount Eden panorama.

THERE is, to employ an old-fashioned phrase, no love lost between the towns of New Zealand; and Auckland, for reasons which are obvious and to a great extent natural, stands out a special claimant for supremacy. On the other hand, Wellington and Christchurch take care to impress you with the fact that poor Auckland is, by contrast with them, in the sere and yellow leaf. But, deny as they would the possession of most things worth having to Auckland—the City of the Two Harbours, the Corinth of the South, as it has been termed—I never met a man, North, Middle, or South, who dared deny that Auckland harbour and Auckland suburbs were beautiful. In this respect, through my ignorance and readiness to accept an estimate at second hand, I was agreeably disappointed. A friend in Brisbane, hearing that I should land at Auckland, warned me that I should find it the reverse of agreeable. He did not use that particular expression, but that was in round figure his meaning. Bluntly, what he did say

was that Auckland was a God-forsaken hole. Whether my friend's experience of Auckland was peculiarly unfortunate, or very antiquated, I do not know, but a very rapid bird's-eye view satisfied me he was wholly wrong. The city is most enviably situated; it affords every sign of solid, sober prosperity; and as for its suburbs, I have seen nothing like it, in this half of the globe at any rate.

Auckland, I take it, is entering into a new and more prosperous epoch. Its first era was the infancy of the colony. Captain Hobson fixed the first seat of government at Auckland. Kororareka, up in the Bay of Islands, was up to then called the Cyprus of the Southern Ocean. The sealers and whalers who used to brawl about the beach, and drink and fight with the Sydney scum that had settled there, were making the Maoris more savage than nature made them; the chiefs lived by pimping for the whalers, and Pomare kept a harem of ninety-six slave girls for them. So far back as 1836, there were six and thirty large whale-ships anchored in the bay at one time, and it had its grog-shops, church, skittle-alleys, gambling hells, and theatre. There are no whale-ships now, and there is no rowdyism. On the whole, those fellows had a roystering, lawless time of it. If a man went too far, they would take him over to Sydney and get him hanged, but this was too troublesome a proceeding to be indulged in often. For these reasons the peaceable inhabitants by-and-by formed themselves into an association to make and execute their own laws, and the number of men that were tarred and feathered and marched along the beach to the tune of "The Rogue's March" was legion. The Home Government heard of this self-governing community and its summary justice, and saw that something must be done. So they gave

Captain Hobson, R.N., a lieutenant-governor's commission, and sent him to New Zealand to use it. This was in 1840. The treaty of Waitangi was soon signed with the chiefs, stipulating that the sovereignty of the island should belong to the Queen, but the land to the natives, and New Zealand was then and there declared an English dependency. In this manner Lieutenant-Governor Hobson set up his flagstaff in the province of Auckland.

From this slight historical summary the reader may imagine what was the first era of Auckland's history. The Government was everything; the military were supreme; odds and ends of humanity jostled each other in this new, strange land; justice had to be administered sometimes with a rude hand; bloody brawls occurred between whites and natives in the streets. The district generally must ever be associated with stirring events that make, even at less than forty years old, the history of New Zealand interesting. There is a Maori poem which draws a significant picture of Auckland, and the estimation in which it was held:—

"I am going to Auckland to-morrow,
The abode of the Pakehas;
The place tobacco and blankets are sold;
Where the Governor and the soldiers live,
Where the prison stands,
Where the large ships lie,
The fine boats are seen,
Where men are hung;
To-morrow I shall go to Auckland."

The next era commenced in 1864, when the seat of government was moved to Wellington, and that may be described as an era of stagnation. The great prop was removed, and the structure, if it did not tumble

down, maintained only a tottering position. Property owners remembered, even as the Israelites remembered the flesh-pots of Egypt, how at the first sale of land in Auckland, in 1843, twenty-six acres realized eleven thousand pounds. It must have been during this era that my friend who described Auckland as a God-forsaken hole paid it a visit, although how he could have applied so irreverent an epithet to a place whose natural beauties must always have been remarkable passes comprehension. But the third era has set in. The wide, long, well-kept main thoroughfare, which at the upper end branches off into three roads, like a broad arrow; the brick and stone buildings, stately and uniform; the side-walks, twelve feet wide, and in admirable order; the traffic by road, rail, and sea; the extensive suburbs—these point to the new era in which Auckland, forgetting that it imbibed its infantile pap from the Government spoon, and wept bitterly when that spoon was withdrawn, means to rely upon itself and its great natural resources. In time, no doubt, it will forgive Wellington for usurping its place as capital, and will gradually find its wounds on that account healing; but at this date there is not much toleration of Wellington, and soreness does exist, as is but natural.

The suburbs pleased me more than the city itself. "God made the country and man made the town." Queen Street is a very fine thoroughfare, and there is no complaint to be made of the minor streets, except that they have a habit of running upwards out of Queen Street, like the ribs of a ship. The inner harbour is always a scene of liveliness, for, if there are no such ocean steamers as the grand San Francisco mail boats, there are coasters puffing and screaming, and if these fail, you may fall back upon the trim white schooners which

trade to the South Sea Islands, and of which there are always a number in or near Auckland. Timber-yards and ship-building establishments add to the busy character of this end of the town. Somehow, this is the end of the town (or any town) that I like best. To me it is better than shops or bazaars. The sharp whirr of the circular saw, as it attacks the log of good-tempered kauri pine, and the fragrance of the timber, as it sputters out the dust of its heart, are most agreeable. The monotonous tap of the caulker's mallet, as it plugs the seams of the little craft that, six months hence, will probably be riding at anchor in some coral cove in the Southern seas, is not unmusical.

This is the kind of life to be seen at the lower or harbour end of the town, and I would not have loitered there, having already expressed a preference for suburban Auckland, but for the line of warehouses opposite. They are kauri gum depôts, and now or never is the time to offer a few observations upon this Auckland specialty. I was a little surprised to find that the famous kauri pine does not grow further south than 37° 30′ latitude, and that, therefore, it is confined to a comparatively small section of the North Island. The tree itself is not handsome, though it has a sombre solidity and picturesqueness of appearance that demand respect; and as it is capricious in its conditions of growth (insisting, for example, upon a moist sea-breeze and stiff clay soil), as it has long been a source of steady wealth to timber-getters, sawyers, and exporters, as it is valuable to the cabinet-maker and ship-builder, and as it promises some day, unless great care be taken in forest conservancy, to become as extinct as the moa, you are ready to attach to it an importance beyond what it merits as a mere tree. It is not easy now for

the traveller to find a good sample of kauri pine forest; but those who have persevered in their search, and seen a group of, say, fifty fully matured trees, with untouched forest surroundings, assure me that it is a stately sight. The kauri certainly has a majestic trunk and grand outspreading branches.

Naturally the kauri gum is only to be found in the kauri pine country. Perhaps it should be said country in which the pine once flourished, for the gum-fields, by their extent and position, indicate that the fine forests have disappeared at an alarming rate. The gum is found in the ground, occasionally on the surface, but ordinarily at depths varying from six inches to two or three feet, and in lumps ranging from the size of a walnut to pieces weighing 150 pounds. The average run of gum blocks seems to be fist-size. The gum is gathered by both Maoris and Europeans, who prod about with steel-pointed spears some four feet long. Auckland is the emporium of the gum trade, and has been so for nearly forty years. For a while the article was looked upon with suspicion; but during the last seven years the quantity produced has largely increased, owing to the employment of the gum by the United States varnish manufacturers. From 1856 to 1878, fifty-six thousand tons were exported from Auckland. The Americans have branch houses there; for instance, the New York and London firm of Arnold Hines, who have establishments at Zanzibar, Cape of Good Hope, and Singapore, have their depôt in Auckland. Somebody must make money out of kauri gum—the cheat who makes it into mouthpieces and sells it for amber, the carver who fashions it into crosses and other ornaments, and the exporter who can now find a market at from thirty-five to fifty-five pounds per ton, whereas

formerly he was fortunate if he got three pounds. Like all other articles of merchandise, it has its ups and downs; but it is no longer a speculative commodity, and the trade has at length gained the stability which belongs to any legitimate article of commerce. The pieces of gum on the warehouse floor roughly resemble a heap of stones slightly sanded, but each piece has to be well brushed and classified; the finest specimens are scraped and classified a second time, and the gum is then packed into boxes, two hundred pounds nett, for exportation.

Standing at one of the windows of the Northern Club —which is superbly situated—and surveying what was visible of Auckland harbour and the distant landscapes from that outlook, and so surveying until admiration became almost emotion, it occurred to me that I might, after all, without intending it, be led into exaggeration. The doubt arose whether, after the droughty seasons we had unfortunately experienced in Queensland, a person fresh from that colony, yet who had not been long enough from home to forget the charms of English scenery, was altogether a fair work-a-day critic. Might not such a one find a glamour which others would look for in vain? Yet perhaps not. Then I tested the matter by the prose of details.

The picture there rolled out beneath and beyond must be one at the disposal of thousands of the inhabitants, for there were sites more elevated still. Within fifty yards were the grounds surrounding what in those earlier days was Government House—white lodge gates —shade-giving oak, beech, elm, and ash, in all the beauty of spring-green colour warmed by the sun upon foliage that had attained the ripeness of maturity— gravelled walks mottled with alternate shade and sun-

shine—lawns of emerald velvet—a shady walk outside the palings—and a level hard road that lost itself round a corner upon which the phantoms of overhanging branches gently played. This was the foreground. The background was a semicircle of hills wooded with firs, poplars, and other European trees, all in the hey-day of new life and displaying not only every variety of shape, but every variety of tint common to the tree world. By shifting my position I could get another section of this background: there were villas partly hidden in wavy foliage; three church spires slender and tall upon the horizon, and brought out in distinct outline by light clouds lingering in grey masses on a blue sky; more English-looking houses, more English trees, with yet a further background, well-nigh impalpable, of hazy mountain range. Another shift of position brought me the final section of the picture—two promontories, here yellow with exposed cliff, there darkened with wood and brush, jutting far out into the sea; a ridge of hills far beyond, and calm blue water between reflecting the clouds overhead. Far off as the eye could scan there was an opening between the two headlands, and upon the tranquil intervening surface white-winged craft, canvas spread, were speeding free until they became no larger in the picture than the sea-gulls soaring in their wake. Across the harbour the sun was gilding the suburban settlement of the North Shore, nestling at the feet of its grass-covered protector, with picturesque, if low, ranges beyond.

I might be mistaken, but nothing could convince me that these bays, headlands, stretches of verdure, bosoms of woody hill, faint irregular confines of glittering expanse of water, and the harmonious intermingling of houses, hills, and waters, did not as a

whole constitute a glorious view—at least, to any but a curmudgeon who is beauty-blind and who is determined to regard the world as a desert and vale of tears. And, if the limit of my window permitted, I could show that the semicircle which I have imperfectly described in sections continues, with still finer bits of scenery, until, what with promontories and inlets, rivers and estuaries, islands and cliffs, you would find it difficult to say where lay the highway through which ships found their passage to the ocean.

The visitor to Auckland who does not go to the top of Mount Eden does not live up to his privileges, and knows little of those suburbs which everybody admits are beyond cavil. When I reached the southern towns I was astonished at the discoveries I made respecting the climate of Auckland. At Wellington I was assured it was unbearably hot, muggy, mosquitoish, rainy, and stormy at Auckland, and it mattered nothing that my experience was of a contrary description. It is but fair to state that in all the towns south of Cook Strait the people had never a good word to say of the climate of their former capital. They denounced it by bell, book, and candle, as not fit for Europeans to live in. The Aucklanders themselves, it is but just to add, while admitting that it was sometimes warm in the height of summer, were not only contented, but rapturous in praise of their homes. For myself, I have an absurd habit of speaking as I find, and what I found was an English day in June—not one of the hail, sleet, and east wind days which do sometimes mar the general effect of that leafy month in the British Islands, but the typical June day of the poet, novelist, and painter. The walk to Mount Eden fixes it on the memory true as the photographer's negative.

It was cool enough, though the sun shone unobscured, to have walked briskly, if one had been so inclined, yet not be drenched with perspiration. But time not pressing, and not having to catch a train or win a wager, I could afford to saunter; could linger on the highway, and wander knee-deep in trefoil and flowering marsh-mallow; pluck the sweet clover blossom and eat it, as we used to do when, careless urchins, we roamed the meadows of the shires, and destroy the flavour of its honey by nibbling a leaf from the wild sorrel; and could renew acquaintance with the milk-thistle—sweet reminiscence of rabbit-keeping days—and luscious English grasses nodding their seed-laden plumes over the footpath. Lingering was a necessity when, leaving the town in the rear, I advanced towards the hospital road.

There is better cottage gardening in New Zealand than you generally find at home, because memories of home inspire it, and in the Auckland suburbs it was perfection. The blue star and glossy leaves of the periwinkle burst through the hedges to your feet; and the scent of roses, jasamine, mignonette, stock, wallflower, mingled lovingly. In the first open field there were wild mint in flower, gorse bushes brilliant with golden spangles, sweet-brier waiting only to be crushed to yield the perfume of its nature; children were trooping up under a hedge laden with boughs of hawthorn bloom and the white floral mass called Mayballs by English villagers. One ruddy-faced toddler had already found the rough side of life by heedless handling of the dog-rose bush; the margin of a brook in a hollow was lined with willow, and watercresses sprung up in its bed; cottagers on the further side were weeding their strawberry beds, and keeping the youngsters out of an osier plantation; the bees were humming in the air,

and the groves were musical with birds. It was the balmy time between spring and summer, and flowers and birds were in carnival.

On the top of the first hill a rustic stile tempted me to turn aside and wander into a half-garden, half-copse, where all was in shade and where the English shrubs and trees harboured blackbirds, thrushes, larks, and finches. They sang in the boughs, answering each other in their own thrilling and trilling language, never fearing the presence of man; for they neither fled nor paused in their song as I sauntered along brushing now the hawthorn, now the sweet-brier, now sycamore, now young oak, now honeysuckle, and paying tribute of recognition and joy to the bonny English flowers, very few of which were unrepresented in the borders. I learned afterwards that I had strayed unawares into the Domain, or Botanical Gardens; and the acclimatization gentlemen of Auckland have the pleasure of knowing that in addition to their other works they have provided, in that cool grove into which I strayed, a daily open air concert, by performers who require no pay and who never break their engagements. The naturalized birds are, indeed, so plentiful that the society employs a birdcatcher with the view of supplying them to residents in remote districts.

Resuming the walk upwards to Mount Eden, and pausing not more than a few minutes at the apple and pear trees, laden with blossoms; at hedges of ivy or blackthorn into which convolvuli were surreptitiously creeping, or clipped whitethorn, crowned with woodbine that, scorning to be surreptitious, boldly drooped down upon your shoulder; at coppices of dark firs, spreading a soft carpet of their own needles underfoot, and putting forth their young cones overhead; at

thickets of furze, elder trees smothered in cream-coloured bosses, arum lilies growing miscellaneously in hedge-rows along with friendly periwinkles; and at a hundred other temptations in kind—resuming, I say, the upward walk, the foot of the mountain is by-and-by reached, and with it the bridle path, winding round the base and twisting onward and upward until the summit is arrived at. No wonder that these skylarks keep circling upwards, wild with melody! The clear breezy atmosphere makes you wish the same power were yours. Towards the top the walk becomes a climb, and the cairn marking the highest point is welcome, both as an indication that you are there and as a seat. There at last is the panorama you have sought! Gaze on it, gloat over it, drink it in—you cannot transfer it to canvas or printer's type.

On Mount Eden you secure the practical advantage of overlooking the city and following the configuration of the isthmus upon which Auckland is built. You can discern the lay of Waitemata harbour on the east coast, and Manukau on the west; north appears the beginning of the peninsula, which ends, roughly speaking, with North Cape. The centre of the city occupies a ridge, and some of the bays of the harbour are clearly defined. Farms and cottages, villas and mills, are toy-size on the plain, intersected with threads which are roads, and dotted with villages like Noah's arks. Extinct volcanic cones are scattered here and there, and Hochstetter's book—the most scientific work published on New Zealand, and in other respects invaluable—claims that though they are on the smallest scale they are perfect models of cones and craters. The volcanic evidences are, however, but secondary objects of the scene. What the eye rests upon are the grass and

clover fields, the clumps of acclimatized trees, the ponds gleaming in the old circular tuff craters, the railway train a mere ant travelling upon an elongated line of packthread, and land and water stretching so far away that a faint purple at length half obscures them, and almost justifies your doubt whether the wonderful panorama is not, after all, a dream. It was wonderful in its vastness, its variety, its softness, its flush of spring, its pure sunshine.

CHAPTER III.

BAY OF PLENTY.

Hot springs and mineral waters—Waiwera—Leaving Auckland—Bay of Plenty and Poverty Bay—Tauranga—An old acquaintance—The modernized Maori—Mixed costumes—Highland or Maori?—Blue silk and black pipe—Lazy and savage—A human flesh connoisseur—In a Maori village—Old Ocean's largess—The New Zealand salmon—White Island.

THE curative properties of the New Zealand hot springs and mineral waters are as yet but little understood; but the time is not far distant when the North Island on this account will have a reputation not limited to Australasia. People are sometimes carried ashore from the steamers helpless and groaning with pain, and return, frequently in the course of a month or two, hale, lively, and impudent. We shall not arrive at the hot springs, *par excellence*, till the next chapter, but it would not be right to leave Auckland without mention of Waiwera, which is somewhat pretentiously advertised as the sanitarium of New Zealand and the Australian colonies.

Waiwera is only four-and-twenty miles from Auckland, in a northerly direction, and, being of convenient approach, is a boon to those who, coming to New Zealand for restoration to health, cannot afford the time

or money to travel up to the hot lakes of the interior. The hotel is probably the largest in New Zealand: and as it has been fitted up with liberal means of recreation, and extra comforts worthy of a first-rate English watering-place; as it is managed by a lady who has a genius for making things pleasant for her customers, and is able to keep even querulous old gentlemen and peevish ladies (being inmates of the same house) from quarrelling and all uncharitableness—than which genius could no further go—it is resorted to by holiday people who only drink the waters because others do it. There are over a hundred bedrooms, drawing-rooms for evening music and dancing, billiard-room, croquet and lawn-tennis grounds, and well-cultivated gardens; and in front of the hotel there is a sea bay, with the island of Kawau, Sir George Grey's New Zealand paradise, opposite. Wherefore, in the lazy summer months, when the roses are blowing, and the strawberries at their prime, a surprising number of young ladies and gentlemen in the province become indisposed, and it is found necessary to send them to Waiwera, where in four and twenty hours they are found in robust health, riding, driving, boating, singing, croqueting, dancing—and the rest.

If ample testimonials from persons known in the colony are to be believed, patients suffering from rheumatism, scrofula, gout, sciatica, and skin diseases have been wholly cured at Waiwera. They drink the water, which is aerated; take the baths, which are made as tempting as a bather who is not Oriental could desire; and, if they are very far gone with disease, they sweat in blankets. I met, returning from these springs, a Victorian digger who looked fit for anything; yet he told me that two months previously he had come over

to the colony, his limbs gnarled and knotted like a crabbed oak, and despairing of ever getting rid of the unasked-for legacies of many years of rough life on the diggings. English analysts, to whom a sample of the Waiwera springs was sent, reported that it generally resembled the waters of such continental spas as Aix-la-Chapelle. It must be remembered, however, that Waiwera is not comparable to the hot lakes; but as a fashionable seaside resort, and as a halting-place after the voyage to lay in strength for further journeying, it has valuable attractions.

Longing and lingering is the look behind given by the passenger leaving Auckland. All the points of beauty which had pleased him on entering the harbour assume other aspects now; but still they remain points of beauty. Across the Hauraki Gulf, round by the Cape of Coromandel peninsula, and we are again coasting amongst the islands. But one soon forgets the intricate navigation in the confidence which the management of the steamer begets, and in the thought that, next to the British Islands, there is no coast in the world more thoroughly surveyed than this. Soon we are passing a splendid archipelago of rocks—the d'Haussez Group, in Mercury Bay, where Captain Cook anchored, the Maoris clustering on the beach, viewing the ship under canvas with wonder, and finally coming to the conclusion that the vessel was a whale with white wings, and the sailors gods with skins to match. The steamer *Taupo* (pronounced Towpo), in which I made the trip between Auckland and Tauranga, is named, like the rest of the fleet, after a native place, and is a fine ship, though on this occasion she was too much crowded. The company owning these vessels must assuredly be making fat dividends, for it may

here be interposed once for all that on the New Zealand coast I never sailed in a steamer that was not filled with passengers; while in one instance the smoking-room and even saloon tables had to be converted into berths. However, it is seldom more than a day's distance between place and place, and he must be a wretch indeed who cannot preserve his good temper for twenty or thirty hours. Besides, a philosopher resigns himself to the inevitable; and if you would travel at all hereabouts it must be by steamer, seeing that the middle of the North Island is occupied by lofty mountains, broken valleys, and dense virgin forests, over which as yet no railway or balloon service has been projected.

The Bay of Plenty was named by Cook, who—peace and honour be to his memory!—necessarily enters largely into New Zealand history and traditions. Lower down the coast is another bay which he named Poverty Bay, and I have heard from residents who know the back country of both that these names should be reversed. But the hero of our boyhood, the old circumnavigator, found plenty in the one and poverty in the other, and christened according to his lights. And it is not easy to discover why, on its merits, this bay should not retain and deserve its name. One cannot keep on for ever using adjectives, else I might justly repeat much of what I have written in a preceding chapter. The scenery of Tauranga harbour is assuredly beautiful, and it grows upon you on closer acquaintance on land. In the early morning its green shores and soft distances, with the township bright and compact by the water-side, were extremely welcome after the rugged and fantastic rocks upon which the moonlight had streamed during the night watches. The

tide was out, and the *Taupo*, as occasionally happens with the steamers, cast anchor.

Puffing, snorting, and making a vast fuss about nothing, after its kind, a small steamer came out from Tauranga, conveying new passengers to replace those who went ashore. And as it came alongside I noticed the smiling face of a friend. Does any one ever travel in these latter days without falling in with an acquaintance? Distance is well-nigh annihilated by the march of science; that much is certain. The acquaintance I espied on the noisy little tug was a certain witty Queensland member of Parliament—alas! member no more till some sensible electorate sends him back again to enliven the House with his merry quips. He is introduced here because I often came upon his tracks afterwards, and his good wife furnished me with a few eloquent descriptions of her experiences in the lake country, which I there and then entered in my note-book, which I shall by-and-by unblushingly adopt, and which the reader may recognize by selecting the prettiest imagery of the next chapter and putting his finger upon it. I saw this gentleman on that particular morning amongst his luggage, smiling upon it with sleepy comical indifference, and apparently lost in dreamy wonder as to what he should do with it; and there he mused and smiled until his much-tired partner despatched me from the *Taupo* to rouse him.

The morning after I left the *Taupo* she touched rocky ground, and for several minutes shipwreck was imminent. The passengers were roused from their berths in dire alarm, but, as I was afterwards informed, the M.P. was observed surveying the scene of excitement with ineffable and humorous placidity, evolving at his leisure a joke to which, the other passengers being in

anything but a jocular mood, he slyly treated the second steward. Three days later, up in the gloom of the forest, we stopped to look at a broken-down buggy. Need it be said that it was the vehicle in which the M.P. had travelled, and that it had, after thirty miles of pun (and bad road), succumbed to his humour, leaving him and his a heavy trudge to port.

Tauranga gave me my first practical acquaintance with the Maoris. There were a few walking about the streets of Auckland, but they were only analogous to the Australian aboriginals. At Tauranga we had almost the genuine article; that is to say, the modernized Maoris as they appear to the eye of civilization, though not as you find them in their own country villages. It happened that a Government land court was being held in the town, and thither, in consequence, had flocked the natives from every part of the district. They overran the hotels, peeping into your bedroom with childlike confidence; they deafened you with their chatter and clamour; but I would not have missed the sight for the world. Their errand naturally induced excitement, for the land titles of the Maoris are troublesome problems for the officials, and the Maoris themselves are remarkably shrewd in managing their own affairs. Some acquired land by conquest, some by occupation, some by right of fishing in river and sea; some under the old customs by which the chief, and after him his first and second son, had a right to the lion's share; while all free natives were proprietors of the soil, some by fair means and some by unfair. These are complicated matters, as New Zealand Governments still find; suffice to say the Maoris are very tenacious of their rights, and very bitter are some of the colonists because the Maori sticks to his inheritance and refuses

to part with it to the white coveter. The Maoris have learnt the use of a legal title; and it was to settle disputes, and confirm or reject titles, that this land court was being held at Tauranga.

These Maoris were a motley crew; and most of them played the jew's-harp. Sitting on the pavement, lying about on the beach and the grassy borders of it, or in the hotels, they still keep the jew's-harp twanging. Not only was this taste for classical music displayed by the youthful; it was no uncommon thing to meet an aged man stalking along the pavement, solemnly twiddling his jew's-harp as he went. Some of the Maoris around Tauranga are quite wealthy, and drive their buggies. Their dress, as I saw it worn at Tauranga, the occasion having probably somewhat of a holiday character, was remarkably mixed. Many, especially the young men, who have never disfigured themselves by tattooing, wore orthodox European costume, and in good taste too, but these were possibly swell members of a swell tribe. The general costume, however, was to put on a belltopper hat, Garibaldi shirt, paper collar, and necktie, a pilot jacket, a plaid shawl or blanket twisted round the waist, after the style of the Malay sarong, and descending to the knee, below which the bare bronzed leg was shown, with, at the lower end, socks and side-spring boots. They seemed to be particular about the kilt—it is a venerable kilt, and it will be for me evermore a moot question whether the Highlanders got it from the Maoris, or the Maoris from the Highlanders—and the elastic-side boots.

There was no absolute uniformity in hats. The chimney-pot was *de rigeur*, apparently; but French caps, deerstalkers, and wide-awakes were to be seen, together with nondescript *chapeaux* that must have

been the cast-off property of strolling nigger minstrels. There were some Maoris who scorned the use of anything more than an honest shawl or blanket; but they knew how to use it both for covering and adornment. The colours were decidedly loud, and a man appeared to be not properly attired without something, greenstone or metal chiefly, hanging from his ear. The most distinguished Maori I saw at this time was an old grey-haired chief. He wore a belltopper that was evidently made for a small boy, an antique swallow-tail coat, a Rob Roy kilt, blue socks, and patent leather shoes; he was elaborately tattooed, and from his right ear was dangling a black bird about the size of a starling, with a curved slender beak quite three inches long. The beak was thrust through a hole in the ear, and held fast.

Many of the Maori ladies of the upper ten wore neat European dresses complete, but the humbler orders were innocent of stockings and shoes, and were conveniently draped in a shawl which did duty also as a covering for the head. But they are not, as a rule, good looking, particularly those who are tattooed. They have fine eyes and teeth, incline to stoutness towards middle age, have graceful carriage, and have good black hair, if they would only keep it in order. And they all smoke. In a well-horsed buggy, approaching the hotel door, sat a young Maori lady, dressed in fashionably cut sky-blue silk costume, with duchess hat and feather, and parasol to match. Her gipsy eyes and hair were black as the night; her features handsome as a gipsy's are handsome; her comportment modest and even pensive; I dare say her white handkerchief was duly perfumed. She surveyed the bustle of the street with an intelligent smile;

then turned to a male Maori sitting on the back seat. She had asked him for something, perhaps a prayer-book or a fan. He fumbled in his pocket, and at length handed her a short, black, stinking pipe, which she stuck between her ivory teeth, and smoked like a chimney. I have in my time seen elegantly dressed women smoking delicate cigarettes, but never before saw a short clay pipe puffed by a young lady in sky-blue silk dress. The Maori women have a most musical way of talking, and you might back them for making play with their big liquid eyes—when they choose—against the beauties of Seville. This may be pleasant when the performer is a good-looking half-caste, whose broken English is sweetly fascinating; but not so when the lady is an unadulterated, fully matured Maori, with broad nose, cavernous mouth, and frizzy unkempt hair, whose underlip, thanks to the national tattoo, is blue as a dew-worm, who carries a baby bundle at her back under her shawl, and who smokes her perpetual pipe, with the smutty bowl downwards.

Some Europeans say that the Maoris are lazy. Why not? They work enough to live, and mankind must go to school and church before it finds out that work is dignified and noble. I met colonists who could not use objurgations too strong against the Maoris—"niggers" as, John Bull fashion, they term them; but there was generally room for suspicion that the secret of this hatred was that the Maoris were too acute for them. My first impression of them was that, bodily and mentally (considering what they are), they were a fine and very interesting race, and nothing that I subsequently saw—and I saw a good deal of them—corrected the impression. We may call them savages, of course. It is our nature to; and they may be

savages still. In many things, nevertheless, they can show some claims to be considered civilized; they can boast of wars as bloody and skilful—of alliances and quarrels between men and men as ruthless—of keeping the weak in subjection to the strong as rigorously—of their poets and orators as famous in their way—of religious beliefs and ceremonies as mysterious—as any nation in Christendom.

A Tauranga gentleman pointed out to me a mild-looking veteran, not so tall or stout as the majority of his brethren, who in his younger days was a notorious connoisseur of human flesh: a sort of scientific cannibal, I suppose. Years ago he came to my informant's father, at a time and in a place when the Maoris had things their own way on the war-path, and felt about him tenderly, appraising the worth—as meat—of his most fleshy parts; and, after retiring, grunting his satisfaction, he returned with another Maori, to whom he seemed, with oratorical flourishes, to be emphasizing the prime cuts of the astonished Englishman's legs and arms. The Maori is now a Christian, and does not care to be reminded of the epicurean tastes of the old Adam. His tribe, I believe, proudly maintain that they were always correct cannibals, never neglected the sacred oven, would not insult their victims by improperly cooking them, and invariably distributed to their poorer friends what they could not eat themselves.

There should be few pleasanter places of residence on the eastern coast than Tauranga. It is situated on the shores of a picturesque inlet, with fertile country on the further shore, upon which the Maoris grow their potatoes, wheat, and fruit, just enough, if they are indolent, to afford them a hand-to-mouth subsistence,

yet sufficient to yield them a money return if they apply themselves diligently, as a portion of them do, to farming. There are some excellently farmed colonists' lands outside of Tauranga, and the place is growing fast as a port. That the shopkeepers are patronized by native customers may be seen from the frequent Maori inscriptions upon the signboards, and the arrivals of sailing-boats with dusky crews and passengers from across the bay. There are a considerable number of natives in the locality at the present time, though they do not abound as at the period prior to the memorable Gate pah affair. I visited one Maori settlement at the head of the harbour, about an hour's sail from Tauranga pier. It stands upon high land overlooking a pretty cove, and the heights are covered with peach-tree groves, under which an idle people may smoke the pipe of peace, and, sheltered from the sun which may illumine, or the storms that may disturb them, gaze unconcernedly abroad upon the land and waters.

A party, of whom I was one, here spent a most pleasant afternoon amongst the Maoris in their own home. It is a pity they are not more eager to learn the English language; but we managed, by the help of our boatman, to make ourselves understood, and to convey to a tall, good-looking Maori damsel, daughter of a chief, and owner of a bit of land in her own right, our admiration of the manner in which she scraped potatoes with a shell. She showed no proud or resentful feeling when I offered her my tobacco-pouch, but her delighted eyes flashed like live coals when, remembering her rank, I substituted a Manilla cheroot. Had I been a painter, I would have sketched an object on the crown of an adjacent slope; it was a Maori woman squatting on her heels, after the manner of her

people, and enveloped completely with a scarlet plaid shawl. Only her face was exposed, and the features were beautiful, coffee-coloured though they might be. When spoken to, you could see the rich blush forming under her tawny skin, like the bloom of a sun-ripened peach. In or near this village was a chief's house, built and fairly furnished on the European model. The chief himself, however, prefers his reed hut and blanket in the back garden; and, if you pay him an afternoon or morning call, the reason why you are kept waiting in the drawing-room is that his highness has to don his European clothes and shake off the aroma of his den. A young Maori brought up his horse nicely saddled, and offered me its use for five shillings; another, with much pride, showed us a large wooden cottage being erected; a fearful old hag begged some matches; a not at all fearful young houri took a fancy to a puggaree, and ran away laughing gleefully because I made her a present of it; we sat round the fire and smoked with them—men, women, children, with pigs and dogs sniffing on the outskirts of the circle—and saw no sign of awkward manners amongst these light-hearted people. A rainbow bent its arch of promise over Tauranga beyond, a rain-storm swept over the bay, the waves lapped the sand and shells of the beach, murmuring low as a dove's coo, and, when the storm passed and evening drew near, the grass and the leaves were covered with brilliants, and the distant hills and shores appeared in a new luminous raiment of glorious violet hue.

Old Ocean does not thrust his long sinuous fingers into all the New Zealand coast without giving largess. When the tempest tries him beyond bearing, it is true he strews the shore with wrecks, but he gives the

people an abundance of fish. At Auckland I had seen the youngsters catching schnapper, trevalli, and other fish from the wharves at the foot of Queen Street; at Tauranga I saw the first kahawai, or New Zealand salmon. Of course, it is not a salmon in any true sense but that of appearance, and this fully warrants the assumption of the name. It is not worth much for the table, but it is a grand fellow for sport. You take it from a boat, whiffling with a bit of rag or a large artificial fly, or spinning with a small mullet. The fish rushes boldly to the surface, and being struck, goes off with a mighty rush, leaps out of the water, and fights courageously. It is really artistic sport, very much prized by both Europeans and natives; and, as the fish grows to two feet and a half in length, is heavy in proportion to its length, and possesses an invincible spirit of its own, the kahawai (pronounced kaw-wye) is not contemptible game for the angler who uses a rod and running tackle.

One of the most conspicuous, and at the same time most curious, objects in the Bay of Plenty is White Island. The visitor is not likely to overlook it. With precipitous sides it rises out of the centre of the bay, is three miles in circumference, and 860 feet high at the summit. The steamers pass near it, and, lest its bulk should not challenge observation, the white cloud of steam ascending from the boiling spring seething in its crater proclaims it, night and day, one of the curiosities that in New Zealand so constantly call for the note of exclamation. This gigantic steam jet was thrown up probably one thousand feet as we passed, but in very calm weather it reaches double that height. Around the crater are minor jets discoverable through a field-glass. It is a terribly sterile-looking island,

though it is said there is vegetation—both stunted scrub and feeble grass. Nothing else lives there, except the gangs of men in the employment of the company which works it for sulphur; and even they can rarely be persuaded to return to its inhospitable rocks, after the expiration of their first term of engagement. The island is so hot with internal fires that walking is painful. Stones thrown in are shot violently into the air by the geysers; there are lakes of sulphureous water, and at least one mud geyser; and the rest of the island is covered with crystallized sulphur. It is this which the company at Tauranga attempts to utilize, and for that purpose costly works have been built in the suburbs of the town. A galvanized iron bucket left in one of the sulphureous lakes for a couple of days was eaten wholly up by the impregnated water.

CHAPTER IV.

THROUGH THE FOREST.

Civilization does not suit — Preposterous sentiment — Native canoes—Ledger entries of the brave—Road to the lakes—A phenomenal pony—Site of the Gate pah—Fern country—New Zealand flax—English birds—The "Eighteen-mile Bush"—Like moorland—Maori country.

A STRONG interest in the history (so far as I know it) of the Maori, and the future of extinction to which he seems by common consent doomed, kept me longer at Tauranga than would otherwise be the case, and it would not, mayhap, be amiss if we could all revive or create an interest in this unfortunate race. To them seems especially to apply the apparently heartless saying, that it is the habit of the English to improve the natives of the countries they colonize off the face of the earth. When this lightly repeated phrase, however, has actual application, there is about it an underlying sadness which deadens the wit. We have civilized the Maori; he sits in both Houses of the New Zealand Parliament; he has copied our habits and customs. Is it true, then, that civilization is killing him? In one of the handbooks I had taken in my travelling bag I read—the Maoris passing and repassing beneath the window—"How rapid that

decrease has been may be judged when it is known that, in 1820, the native population was roughly estimated at one hundred thousand souls, and that now it amounts to only about forty thousand." The next volume that lies at hand remarks: "It is grievous to observe that since they have relinquished cannibalism, tribal wars, polygamy, slavery, tapu superstition, human sacrifice, sorcery, and heathenism, they have so strangely lost their former elasticity of spirit, their hearty enjoyment of life, and have become almost a childless community and a fast-decaying race. *Our civilization never suited them.*" At this rate, interest or no interest on our part will not, I suppose, help the Maori much; but after possessing myself of the above facts, and strengthening them by comparison with others, I felt inclined, when I got down upon the Tauranga pavement, to abase myself in the dust, and beg pardon, on behalf of my fellow-countrymen, of the first Maori I met, and enlarge as little as possible upon the virtues of which we are so proud, and the benefits for which, we smugly tell ourselves, he and his kindred should offer up the constant prayer of gratitude and thanks.

Instead of carrying this preposterous sentiment into practice, I strolled across to the beach to inspect a couple of Maori canoes. They represented a style of naval architecture that will soon be extinct. It is seldom that a native canoe is built now, and it is not often, out of the museums of the towns, that good specimens of the skilfully carved sternposts of the Maori war canoe can be seen. The canoes at Tauranga were poor craft compared with the great canoes, eighty feet long, in which the warriors in the olden time went forth to do battle, fifty paddlers rowing on each side,

and a group of half-orator, half-minstrel men in the centre, urging them on to victory. They were painted red, it is true, and that was ever the correct colour of the Maori navy; there was fair carving enough upon stem and sternpost, and in shape they were the long, narrow, shallow concern, with high curved sternpost, made familiar to us in picture-books. But they were small and shabby, and suggestive not so much of heroic deeds and warlike chants as of cast-aside theatrical properties. It was useless to try and work one's self into new sentiment over these boats, though one could not succeed in shaking off the unpleasant feelings caused by thinking of the effects of our civilization upon the Maoris.

Up the hill, therefore, I went, over the springy grass spangled with the yellow flowers of the Cape weed, and rich in white and red clover blossoms, through the wicket in the sweet-brier hedge, and into the little memorial enclosure where lie, undisturbed, till the last trump, the officers, soldiers, and sailors who fell in action out yonder at the Gate pah and on other Maori battle-fields. The grass and weeds were growing to a luxuriant height, and birds and insects added their tuneful contributions to the summer-day music of the air. A fitting resting-place was this quiet, sweet-smelling nook, where the tasselled grass nodded before the sea-breeze, the winds whispered in undertones on the edge of the cliff, the flowers leaned their gay heads modestly upon the tombs of the brave, and the heedless hubbub of the world never came. In letters, perhaps uncouthly cut, but telling all too plainly their story, you could read, in brief record, the names and ages and ranks of the men who, in one branch of the service and another, assisted in carrying out our idea of

civilization. The Maoris of the Tauranga district in those days gave a very emphatic account of themselves, and the white monuments of this sequestered God's Acre are enduring ledger entries of the price we had to pay.

Reverting to the practical affairs of the road, we must now turn our attention south, and prepare for our journey to the hot lakes. This was until very recently a bugbear to travellers. But it need no longer be so. This season, for the first time, a regular and frequent coach communication had been established, and the growing popularity of the excursion was inducing the people interested to make the trip comfortable and agreeable. Should the coach be full, which is within the bounds of possibility, there are buggies to be had at reasonable cost of hire at Tauranga. But, if it can be managed, let the traveller take to the saddle. During the eight days after leaving Tauranga I rode several hired hacks and never had to complain of one; and the customary charge of seven and sixpence a day was reasonable enough, though two and sixpence a feed for corn either ran up the sum total, or put the hapless beast upon short commons.

There are, let me add for the further information of the excursionist, two ways of "doing" the lakes. Number one is to go from Tauranga by the best means available, and return thither to catch one of the Union Company's coasting steamers. Number two is to keep the southerly road by coach or horse to Napier, where the steamer may be again picked up, or continue the road from Napier to Wellington. I can conceive of nothing more delightful than for a party of three or four men, with leisure, to travel the entire distance in the saddle, taking with

them a guide and packhorse, with tent and camp furniture. There would be no difficulty about it, weather permitting, and the cost need not be great, especially if the horses were purchased outright, and sold again at the end of the journey. To persons pressed for time, however, the coach, the railroad, where it exists, or the steamer, which is generally the most speedy and certain of all, will be a necessity.

One of the guide-books had led me to suppose there would be plenty of communication with the lake country, but it soon became apparent that I should be fortunate to get there at all without delay. There was no coach for five days, and the only buggy to be heard of was a small vehicle in which luggage could not be stowed away. I was very anxious to make the straight line from the Bay of Plenty to Hawke's Bay—*i.e.* from Tauranga to Napier—but the coaches seemed to be playing at cross purposes, and this project threatened to consume so much time in mere travelling that the prospect of getting amongst the trout of Middle Island—the grand object of my expedition—was infinitesimal. From the date of leaving Brisbane to my return to it I had two months to play with; and, as the reader will see before these notes are finished, I got over a good deal of ground. But if the stranger going to New Zealand for a holiday can beg, borrow, or steal three months instead of two, it will be all the better. In three months he can see everything; in two months, especially if he pay his devoirs to the haunts of the speckled trout, he must make up his mind to deny himself much that is worth seeing.

For myself, I was in something of a fix. Going to the bar of the hotel, to make inquiries for the twentieth time, I heard a young gentleman asking

for letters, and at once recognized him as Mr. P., son of an English friend of mine who for nearly twenty years has represented a Lancashire borough in the House of Commons. This young gentleman I had last seen in his father's apartments at the Langham Hotel, at the top of Regent Street, and here I found him in the enviable *rôle* which the wealthy young Englishman now adopts as part of his education—that of globe-trotter. I made myself known to him without loss of time, and found he had a letter of introduction to me from his father. He had just arrived in the colonies from California, and was on his way through New Zealand, his immediate object being—which was more to my purpose—the lakes. Moreover, he was one of a party of three (casual acquaintances the other two), and as they had secured the two-seated buggy there was nothing for him but the saddle. Here was my opportunity, if I could get a horse. I did get one, such as it was, and was admitted into the party of four —two Wellingtonians, one Londoner, one Queenslander—all good fellows, who never moped, or quarrelled, or ceased to be merry during the whole of their wanderings.

The pony by which alone I could join the party was a phenomenon, so wretched, ragged, and feeble an appearance did it present. The heavier baggage had to be left at Tauranga, but even the small valise strapped in front of the saddle seemed too much for the dejected-looking little taffy that was to bear me to Ohinemuto, to which place he belonged. A humorous Maori, loafing in front of the hotel, and watching the mustering of the cavalcade, proceeded to make this veritable Rozinante an object of public derision. The fellow was evidently a comical dog, for a number of his

swarthy friends gathered around him on the broad grin, and roared again when he put his finger on the seat of the saddle, and pretended to press the pony to the earth. He made the most, in a farcical way, of the pony's skin, bone, galls, sores, and equipment; and, in a word, manufactured a wonderful amount of capital out of my departure, which to me was, under the circumstances, neither dignified nor triumphant. But let us finish once for all with the phenomenal pony. I was ashamed of him at the start, but, overweighted as he was, he did his work well, and came in at the finish at a spinning gallop. The beast was known all along the road as a wolf for eating. At one place he had won renown by taking the feed-box of a full-grown horse between his teeth, and dragging it into a corner which he could defend with his heels. At another, he was pointed out as the criminal who had eaten a corn-bag, and pulled a child's petticoat off the clothes-line for a like purpose.

About two miles and a half from Tauranga is the site of the Gate pah, but it is now little more than a name, unless a person with local knowledge is by your side to point out where disaster overtook our troops and how the Maoris escaped across to their hill fastnesses. The suburbs of Tauranga, with their neat cottages and blooming flower-gardens, with their rows of poplars and hedges of gorse and hawthorn, are fresh and green; the roads are good; and the open country, into which you descend during the first hour, if not beautiful or imposing, is peculiar to the eye that looks upon it for the first time. Between Tauranga and Oropi (called Europē), a distance of thirteen miles, the country is characteristic. It is all fern land, brownish green in colour, sandy in substance, rolling in formation, show-

ing long stretches of woodless valleys and hills, with occasional patches of ti-tree. The fern (bracken) is dense, and affords splendid cover for game, and at this time of the year it was just recovering from its winter russet. The ti-tree is a flexible shrub, not unlike English broom, only bearing lovely white starlike little flowers that made the roadsides very gay. On the whole, the general aspect of the country reminded me of the moorlands of the old country—fern, however, taking the place of heather, and now and then volcanic symptoms on distant hillsides, or the traces of an abandoned Maori pah, preventing too long a continuance of the resemblance.

A river running through the level land upon which the road descends, soon after passing the Gate pah, was fringed with the famous New Zealand flax, which thenceforth entered every day into the composition of the landscape. Its handsome sheaves of sward-shaped leaves make a pretty picture, and, as they often occur where no other vegetation breaks the prevailing monotony, they are doubly welcome. Several times we put up a pheasant, whose gorgeous plumes flashed in the afternoon sunlight. In the swampy hollow bordering the river we saw New Zealand swamp-hens, and in them I discovered a Queensland acquaintance—the redbill of the sugar plantations. The bird is plentiful, apparently, in all parts of New Zealand, and the only difference I could detect between it and the redbill is a lighter shade in the metallic blue of the breast. Beyond the occasional pheasant, the silence of the country was never disturbed. The residents of districts like these are doing their best to acclimatize English singing-birds, and their supplies come from the parent society at Auckland. In many districts the

fruit-eating English birds are too plentiful, but they are in possession and there they remain, never recognizing the necessity of dispersing to districts where their presence would be welcomed.

At Oropi you have ascended gradually until you are between twelve and thirteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. From the verandah of the comfortable wayside tavern at which you halt previous to entering the forest, a wide prospect is commanded. Opposite is a homestead with fenced-in pastures. Beyond rise hills covered with dark-foliaged pine trees. Northward lies the rolling country over which you have just ridden; and, beyond, the sea distinct and far-stretching. The conical mountain at the entrance of Tauranga harbour stands clearly outlined, and prominent objects on the coast are faintly marked in hazy distance.

Next come eighteen miles of forest—genuine, typical New Zealand forest. This stage of the journey, in three different publications, and by a number of persons who had travelled through it, had been described to me as gloomy and hideous. If travelling in deep shade on a day of hot sunshine be gloom, no doubt it was gloomy; if parasite vegetation and undergrowth forming an impenetrable thicket on either side of the road are incompatible with beauty, hideous is certainly not too strong a word. Yet I do not envy the traveller who, new to the country, proclaims this piece of forest road a necessary evil always to be deplored. It is a singular characteristic of the New Zealand forest that the trees have no family affection. In the extreme north of the North Island there are forests of kauri pine; the black birch further south lives with its kind; and there is one other, and only one other, New Zealand tree that grows *en famille*. The rest are intermixed

without rhyme or reason. The "lawyer" cane takes every advantage of this arrangement, and the supple-jack vigorously assists the confusion. Between them they bar progress through the forest, and render passage absolutely impossible to the man who does not hack his way with knife or axe.

Some of the forest trees are well-shaped, though the foliage is always dark coloured. In this "Eighteen-mile Bush" the rata claims a good deal of attention. It begins its career, like the Moreton Bay fig, as a parasite, strangles the tree it has selected as its victim, and eventually spreads out high overhead its handsome elm-like branches, and in its turn maintains a number of minor parasites. The red pine (rimu) is a fine tree, and it has sombre foliage, which contrasts vividly with the myrtle-like leaves of the kowa, which is often seen by its side. There are shrubs like the witch-hazel, others like the laurel. A bright green-leaved plant, which seems to push itself into the front rank, as if to challenge attention, is the tutu, or, as it is commonly termed, toot, the one poison plant of the country, a narcotic irritant that destroys over-greedy sheep and cattle, and is found everywhere. The bush fuchsia bears a flower which sufficiently resembles the fuchsia to carry its name, but it is at the best a dull facsimile of the original. Many of these trees and shrubs flower later in the year, but just now there was a marked absence of floral life.

In the centre of the forest we had reached an altitude of two thousand feet, and had floundered through some abominable roads. It is said that it rains five days out of the six in the "Eighteen-mile Bush," and that may account for the manner in which the buggy sunk axle-deep in mud, and the horses floundered through miles

of slough. Where the shrubs had been cleared freely away on either side, and daylight had thereby been let in, the ground was dryer, and some day, probably, such clearing becoming general, there will be fewer buggies breaking down, and the travelling will be fairer. There are some sharp pinches and curves, and the descent to the bridge which crosses the Mongarawa river is by a zigzag, affording grand scenery. Massive rocks, whose fissures are streaked with ferns, mosses, and shrubs, and dotted with trees that have obtained foothold high above mother earth, tower above and in front, and you look down from the roadway into gullies and gorges filled with dense undergrowth, above which the spreading crowns of the tree ferns appear, conspicuous by their graceful shapes and lighter colour. There are, in truth, three or four miles of extremely fine mountain scenery, of which the romantic Mongarawa gorge may be considered the nucleus.

Yet another twelve miles after we emerged from the forest upon a road that invited us to make up for lost time, and the final stage, Ohinemuto, was in sight. We crossed ice-cold streams clear as crystal, and out of whose silver sand watercresses in rank abundance were springing into flower. The country still savoured of the Scottish and Irish moorlands, and the glimpse we obtained of a blue lake in the bosom of the hills was in keeping with the idea. But, as we approached still nearer, white clouds of ascending steam, and the recurrence of Maori huts, warned us that we were in Maori country, and on the verge of the land of mystery.

CHAPTER V.

WONDERLAND.

Rotorua—A veritable hotbed—An uncanny thought—Bath water at choice—Easy cooking—Bathing in company—A formidable name—Retiring from business—Mud fountains and steam jets—A lost horse—A sulky geyser—Scrambling for money—Ohinemuto a means to an end—A leafy cloister—Wairoa Maoris—A musical procession—Old and new style—Lake Tarawera—Rotomahana—The White and Pink Terraces.

THE Maori children smiled us a bright greeting as we neared the white houses of Ohinemuto, standing on a peninsula jutting into the waters of Rotorua. This is a pear-shaped lake about twelve miles long by nine broad, and it has a conical islet rising four hundred feet out of its centre. The peninsula, upon which for a time the traveller to the lakes finds head-quarters, being fortunately elevated above the flat ground of the basin, gives all the advantages of a bird's-eye view. One of the ranges surrounding the lake is two thousand feet above the sea-level, and densely timbered; the rest are lower and more broken, but add much to the scenery, though we soon realized that it was not scenery that would here claim our first attention. The township is inhabited by a few Europeans; the large majority of the residents are Maoris, living in their own village on the point of

the peninsula, amongst the hot springs, and with the shores of the lake on either side. Wilson's Hotel gave us good accommodation, and what there might be lacking in luxury was atoned for by the constant desire of its conductors to make the visitors comfortable.

It took some time to comprehend what it was that we had before us, but, from the moment we did comprehend, the sensation of wonder was kept alive. We walked down the garden of the hotel amongst the flowers, fruit-laden gooseberry bushes, bees sipping honey, luxuriant peas in fragrant blossom, and vegetables strong and glossy. But we were bidden to exercise care by the way, lest we should step into a pool of hot mud, or be scalded by a spring of boiling water. While the warning was being given, I thrust my stick into a soft-looking bit of ground close to the path, and when it was withdrawn steam escaped from the orifice, followed by sputterings of scalding mud. Sulphureous fumes were heavy in the atmosphere; clouds of steam rose from the ground. These fruits, flowers, and vegetables were then flourishing in a natural hot-bed; nay, the entire town was built on a thin crust, beneath which mysterious agencies were seething, bubbling, and boiling.

It was an uncanny thought that at any moment Ohinemuto might tumble bodily through, and be seen no more; and I am not certain whether the suspicion that some such fate is, if not probable, at least possible, does not add to the interest which the visitor feels. The peninsula was, as a matter of historical fact, abruptly shorn of its fair length many years ago by the terminal portion one night collapsing without notice, and disappearing, with a large number of natives, in the lake. Of course, there is no immediate

danger to the careful person, but it is absolutely necessary here, and elsewhere in the district, to be wary. Not two years before my visit one of Mrs. Wilson's children was scalded to death in this very garden. She tumbled accidentally into a boiling spring concentrated within a headless and bottomless barrel sunk into the ground, and lived but a few hours afterwards. And there have been many other fatal accidents.

The first thing the visitor will be inclined to do on arriving at Ohinemuto is to test the virtues of the bath-house at the bottom of the garden. Nature in this region is most accommodating in the supply of bath water. She gives it to you ice cold, and of every temperature up to boiling point, and she offers you a choice between baths tepid and hot, and vapour baths of any strength you may require. While certain winds are blowing you live in a cloud of steam; the Maoris stroll out of their wharres and cook their fish and potatoes in the boiling springs which are enclosed for the purpose and furnished with pegs round the margin upon which to hang their kits. The temptation to bathe is under these easy circumstances naturally strong, apart from the inevitable tendency to do as Rome does, in whatever part of the world Rome may be.

But I would advise no healthy person to take to bathing in the hot springs. It is a voluptuous feeling, no doubt, at the time, to lie in a tank of reasonably hot water, and puff your cigar, but there follows a lassitude that makes the effect scarcely worthy of the cause. The pleasantest bathing at Ohinemuto is in the lake, providing you are careful to avoid the streams thrown unseen from boiling fountains at the bottom. Without precaution you may be swimming in deliciously cold

water, and strike out suddenly into a very hot stream. This bathing must, therefore, be regulated by the set of the wind. You may pretty generally reckon upon company in the waters of the lake, and though at first you may feel awkward on perceiving half a dozen buxom Maori women slipping off their clothes, walking in after you, and disporting themselves merrily around, you soon get used to the novelty, and if it is not positively enjoyable, it is harmless. The brown water nymphs will not hurt you.

A day or two may profitably be spent in the neighbourhood. There are countless boiling springs around the shores of Rotorua, some famous for power over one disease, and some over another, and credited with virtues little short of miraculous, especially in curing severe skin diseases and rheumatic affections. I was shown a bay on the further side of the lake where a leper had lived for years, not daring to move away from the spot upon which alone he could find relief. Rotorua is, it should perhaps be explained, a cold-water lake, and the steam clouds and jets around its shores come from the hot springs which discharge into the bays. There are boats for hire, and a long day of pleasant excursioning will not be thrown away.

The most wonderful object of this district we found to be at a place bearing the formidable name of Whakarewerewa. It is about two miles and a half through the fern from Ohinemuto. On the way we passed a large pond in continual toil and trouble from hot springs, one of which a few years ago developed into a full-blown geyser forty feet high; after remaining on view for a short time, it suddenly retired from active business, and has never appeared since, showing that, if the people on this part of the earth are indolent, the

forces beneath their feet are ever restless, and that surprising effects may be by them at any moment created. A singular country indeed! Here was a stream clear as crystal and cold as a glacier; and within a narrow radius were heaps of sulphur and the *débris* of other eruptions, mud springs quivering day and night, and ground perceptibly hot to the foot. We were riding through the flowering ti-tree and fern, and, hearing a vigorous bubbling amongst the undergrowth, pulled up to see a fountain of black boiling unsavoury mud which had but a short time since added itself unbidden to the strange sights of the district. Then we rode down a steep bank and over a creek which is fed by innumerable small geysers and hot springs, necessitating the utmost precision in following the footsteps of the guide's horse if we would emerge on the other side without boiled pasterns. The line of the river was marked by greater or lesser steam jets whose pure white wreaths curled gracefully amongst the feathery ti-tree and hung lingering about its starry flowers.

In the pumice country beyond, the gentleman who conducted us to the place lost a horse a year before, in a manner which explains emphatically the nature of the country. He was riding at full speed through the fern; the horse went into a hole, and he was shot yards ahead. Scrambling to his feet, and rubbing the sparks out of his eyes, he found the horse gone. There was the newly formed abyss, but no trace of the horse. Next day he came with ropes, and was lowered down into a subterranean cavern sloping obliquely into thick darkness. Lower and lower he went, till his friends above came to the end of the tether, and then they drew him to bank to report that the pit seemed to be bottomless. It is needless, perhaps, to remark that nothing was ever heard or seen of the horse.

At Whaka—, etc., there are several geysers that play in fits and starts, to-day in concert, to-morrow and thenceforth in alternation. Flat spaces surrounded by ti-tree were covered with stagnant ooze, upon which shone oily patches of dull and repulsive colours. While the water of one boiling spring would be bluish and clear, another would be turbid and yellow. A tumbler of water out of a hole not more than eighteen inches in diameter was by the natives pronounced an infallible cure for gripes. Mica was the prevailing product of another hole. Close by was a shelf of sulphuric acid that a month before had destroyed a coat left there for a couple of hours. A truncated cone was shown us as an extinct geyser that was on one occasion, at least, put to practical use. A tribal fight took place at the foot of a neighbouring hill, and a party who came hither with a flag of truce was despatched in the usual manner, and cooked in the funnel of the geyser. [Query—Had these lavish supplies of boiling water anything to do with Maori cannibalism? These clear murmuring springs involuntarily suggest that you ought to cook something.]

It was very disappointing to know that the lion geyser of the group was sulky. Last year it was throwing up a magnificent column sixty feet high; now it emitted nothing but steam, and that feebly. Its rugged sides and the holes at its base were seamed with bright yellow sulphur. It was evidently a prey to internal commotion, and might at any time work itself into a violent explosion. Rumbling echoes of suppressed threat escaped from the fissures and holes, and now and then the threat was not suppressed at all, but assumed fearful volume, while the spouts of vapour spurted angrily. Hard by, beneath the white encrusted walls

of silica, a cold stream purled, and amongst the greenest masses of underwood the white puffs never ceased to show where steam was being blown off from a hundred supernatural safety-valves. And there was a very suggestive smell of brimstone everywhere. We stuck a shilling in a cleft stick, thrust it into a deeply steaming but otherwise quiet spring, and had the satisfaction of drawing it out successfully blackened. We stood on little summits of lava, and after we had left them observed steam issuing from the spot. Finally, after paying a shilling toll to the Maori owners of the place, we paused at one of their bathing pools, and took stock of the men, women, and children who were sitting up to their necks in water; it appeared to be the custom to make them scramble for money, and they did it with more modesty than might have been expected under the circumstances.

But it must be understood that Ohinemuto is, after all, but the means to an end. Rotorua is a fine lake, and the district, as we have seen, has its curiosities; but the Mecca of the pilgrim is Rotomahana and its terraces. It is there he will be in the heart of Wonderland. The visitor may, if he chose, imitate my example, and move on with the intention of seeing more of Ohinemuto on his return, always presuming that he does return. If he have time and opportunity, he should explore the other lakes, and see Taupo, which, if not so interesting as the hot lakes proper, offers grander scenery; and in that case he will not return to the little township on the Ohinemuto peninsula, but keep on in his southerly course.

The ride from Ohinemuto to Wairoa, a distance of ten miles, passed away most agreeably. It was a lovely afternoon, and the varied landscapes looked their

best under the evening lights. Rotorua, thanks to the ascending road, assumed from our higher standpoint a compactness of form it had not presented before, and its irregular coast-line and the mountainous bulwarks guarding it blended harmoniously. There was a mile of perfectly lovely bush; not a ray of sunshine penetrated the leafy arch overhead, and the roadway was bordered with magnificent ferns of many varieties. Emerging from this cloister, we rode by the heads of a couple of pretty lakes, upon which ducks swarmed; and here, as the sun set over the hills, the beforementioned resemblance to Highland scenery was irresistible. At dusk we arrived at the Maori settlement of Wairoa, so called from the river of that name, the picture of a trout stream, and enlisted by a native miller to turn a drowsy, dripping water-wheel by the roadside. It takes a full day to do justice to the two lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana, and it is better to spend the previous night at the hotel, where, under the proprietor's eye, specific arrangements should be made with the boatmen and guide.

Tourists used to suffer from the extortions of the Maoris at Wairoa, and as they are in the ascendant in this part of the country there was no redress. I believe this evil has recently been removed; certainly our party did not encounter it. At the hotel we found a printed scale of charges, and directions, and with that before us there was no difficulty to apprehend. The natives demand that a certain number of boatmen shall be employed at a certain rate, and we found Kate, the half-caste guide, to whom the excursion was entrusted, ready to defend us from any infringement of their own rules. After my return to Queensland I met a gentleman who, with his friends, was subjected to rudeness

from the Wairoa Maoris, but that was under a condition of affairs which has passed away. The Maoris being very independent, and jealous of their rights in this part of the island, carry matters with a high hand, but they are beginning to see that it is to their own interests to smooth away, rather than create, obstacles.

On the hill there is the old mission station, shaded by an orchard of fruit trees, and confronted by a blooming flower garden; in the lower land the neat reed huts of the natives, in the midst of their vegetable patches, are clustered. We went out of our hotel (a branch of Wilson's at Ohinemuto) after dinner, and, having lounged in the soft moonlight, strolled down to a waterfall of which we had heard too much. Amongst the ferns fires burned brightly, casting a ruddy glow upon natives picturesquely grouped in the clearing around them. Silence reigned supreme for a moment, until our footsteps gave the signal for the dogs to bark, and the recumbent Maoris to rouse and chatter. Half a dozen small boys and girls, whose beautiful eyes we had previously made to glisten by presents of sweets and coppers, volunteered to be our escort, and this procession, doubled in the course of our progress, led the way in single file along the narrow path winding through the bracken to the gorge. The graceful little urchins, in the most delightful broken English, sang "I have a Father in the promised land," going through the entire hymn in correct time and tune. The leader was a handsome child six years old, and droll indeed it was to see him, in his capacity of fugleman, belabour the comrade who joined not in the chaunt. Superstitious rites, obscene festivities, barbarous practices—these constituted the Maori old style: these Sunday school hymns and nursery songs were, let us hope, Maori new style.

In the sweetly cool morning—cool as we should reckon coolness in England, and not in Sydney or Brisbane—we brushed the dew from the fern as we followed Kate and her posse of boatmen down the steep declivity which conducted to the boat waiting for us at the head of Lake Tarawera. Some day, when the Maoris are more yielding to the white lessees, there will no doubt be an hotel built at this spot, or on the higher banks to the right, overlooking the blue and charming lake. At present you have a tiresome walk to pay as the penalty of native obstinacy. But they are giving way by degrees. For instance, two years ago the voyage across Lake Tarawera would have been performed in a very low type of canoe, a mere dug-out, in which you were generally drenched and always cramped, and which, when it came on to blow, as it often does from the mountains, would be made an admirable excuse for delay. Now we found a capital whaleboat ready for launching, and there were two other craft of similar capacity in the rude sheds. We had a preliminary squabble about some rowlocks, for the use of which we were expected by another set of boatmen—rivals presumably—to pay backsheesh. We, however, were firm as adamant, and ultimately got afloat.

The shores of Tarawera are well wooded, and they present every variety of picturesque indentation, from rocky promontories and precipitous cliffs to tiny coves and gentle verdurous promontories; some portions of the background of mountain were almost grand. By contrast with this larger lake, Rotomahana, to reach which we submitted to be landed on the shoulders of our boatmen, bore out the first impression which every traveller records: that of an insignificant and even

dirty-looking piece of water—some have even spoken of it contemptuously as a pond—in which marine vegetation shelters the wild fowl, which the natives protect as strictly as an English squire his partridges and pheasants. It is true the lake as a lake is nothing. Yet there is a peculiarity in the surroundings, in the steam clouds revolving over the hill, in the weird colour of the water itself, and in the bleak low ranges of the outer view.

Shoes and stockings were here taken off, Kate having while in the boat set us an example, and we proceeded without loss of time to the White Terraces. The sun shone upon the wonderful alabaster-like steps and upon the cascades pouring from them, and put a million diamonds into the small basins receiving the downfall. Always white and smooth, in waves and drifts and ripples, as if there had been a mighty overflow of liquid alabaster suddenly congealed, these terraces invited us upward to the summit, where vaporous hangings were being agitated by their own inherent vitality, and dispersed by the breeze, only to give place to other fleecy forms. Green underwood on either side brought out in startling contrast the snow-white material of the fairy terrace and the manifold hues of its dancing waters. Imperceptibly, but not the less surely, the dripping overflow from above is daily adding its incrustations of silica. The favourite theory is that the terraces were originally an overflow of lava from an extinct volcano, and that the mineral properties of the water, flowing from what was the crater, gradually covered the rough, dingy pumice with its ermine-looking folds of drapery. Be that as it may, the effect is entrancing.

The front of the terraces is roughly semicircular,

and it narrows towards the top. The steps vary in height and width, being sometimes inches and sometimes feet. Many of the floors are hollowed out like shells, and at the time of our visit were filled with water of exquisite blue tints. There were grey—French grey—shadings on the perpendicular walls of the steps, and very surprising was the combination of white, blue, and grey. The delicacy and purity of these dazzling terrace stairs caused us to walk with hushed tread, and respect the fretwork, carvings, fantastic stalactite designs, and endless patterns wrought by the dripping water.

At the summit are large basins of hot water. Visitors, when certain winds prevail, are not able to see through the dense curtains of steam. We were fortunate, for though, as the boiling went on below, occasional clouds obscured us, at times we had glimpses of the cerulean glory of the basins. The caldron-in-chief is a terrible affair. At first the yawning pit (it is about forty yards across) was filled with fiercely moving steam, which buffeted the sides and escaped with a rush. Then, with a diabolical roar which made us draw back in haste from the coralline edging, the veil was rent, and for a few moments the fury of this demon kettle's boiling was visible. The waters surged upwards in appalling volume, madly charging right and left, suddenly with vicious foam and thunder upheaving as if to overwhelm us, and then as suddenly sinking out of sight and filling the passages and caverns with dying shrieks and sighs. Appropriately to the letter, a dark recess in the side of a hill is called the Devil's Hole, and here the deafening uproar and ferocious turbulence were again seen. Space fails me to include in this description the lesser wonders of this

land of mystery—the creamy mud pools boiling, writhing, spewing in awesome fashion; the geyser pools spouting hot water, spitting steam jets, or emitting rumbling complaints not pleasant to hear; the springs, great and small, gurgling musically like wine from the flask's throat, or bellowing hoarsely as if they would rend the solid rocks asunder.

A canoe took us over the dingy green surface of Rotomahana to the Pink Terraces, so called because of the delicate tint assumed by the material of which they are formed. The pink, however, is not universal; but the terraces are softer in character, calmer, more smiling, less threatening than those we had left. The steps are broader, the hollows deeper, as if the action of the mystic hands that had fashioned them had moved gently, rounding the marble edges, levelling or more boldly scooping the marble-like floors, and hanging the artistic folds and ornaments with more leisurely grace.

Towards the top of this unique pile the terraces become deep basins, in which we bathed, beginning with the lowest and coldest, and ascending to the next and next, which increased in temperature until thus far and no further could we go. There we luxuriated, sitting upon the hard, smooth floor, the water covering every part of the body but the head and the fingers which held the cigarette. On the other side of the lake the great white terrace shone magnificently, its head still environed in whirling clouds of steam. Here we were at peace, and serene, for the moment wishing for nothing else in the wide world. The bath ended at last, and we retired to the ti-tree scrub to dress. The moment we stepped out of the water the wind, which was in reality soft and soothing, seemed, by contrast with the element we had left, chill as charity, and we then began to wish—to wish for our clothes.

Instead of the raging caldron of the White Terraces —suggesting a monster shed in the bowels of the earth, in which a hundred locomotives were blowing off steam—the corresponding reservoir here was placid in appearance, though woe betide the being who plunged into its simmering depths. It was a circular pool with water so translucid that one did feel tempted to step into it. We waited a while for the steam to be wafted away, and the revelation was of a marvellous sapphire, set in pearl, and surrounded by an outer edge of canary yellow. Lovelier blue, pearl, and amber mortal eye never saw. It must have been some such heavenly vision of colour that the exile on the Isle of Patmos beheld when he looked upon the foundation walls of the New Jerusalem.

In the canoe in which we voyaged down the romantic little river by which we returned to Tarawera we still spoke and mused of the wonders we had seen;—seen, we each confessed, with exceeding amazement. For myself, the roar of the caldrons was in my ears as we shot the rapids and brushed against the reeds, and the colours and forms of the terraces and their outpourings haunted me for many a day.

CHAPTER VI.

CEREMONIAL AND FESTIVE.

Maori land—Farewell to Wonderland—The member for Lambeth—Visit of ceremony—Flea-haunted wharres—Prussian carp—A Maori Waltonian—The haka—Hinemoa and her lover—Railways—Gisborne—The land question—Hawke Bay and Napier—Fast on the rocks—Cook Strait—Exchange no robbery—Wellington harbour.

THE reader will be invited presently to change the *venue* altogether, and to come on board ship again, and leave Maori land behind him. Such the North Island of New Zealand may well be termed. According to the evidence of an elaborate map published by the Government, showing by differently coloured sections the land tenure as it was in 1878, it appears that, while the tints denoting lands owned by Europeans and purchased by them from the natives, the Crown lands, and the lands held by natives under certificate of title, memorial of ownership, or Crown grants, occupy an area of infinitesimal proportion, the colours which indicate either "Lands in the hands of the natives over which the native title has not been extinguished," or "Lands under negotiation to purchase by Government, and proclaimed under the Government Native Land Purchases

Act, 1877," represent the centre of the island, and consequently the bulk of the whole.

Let us then return to Ohinemuto and take proper farewell of our Maori friends. Riding up the dusty road to the town, I saw at the door of the hotel a portly gentleman in shining broadcloth and broad-brimmed beaver, with ecclesiastical curl, gazing benignantly at the natives, who were gazing open-mouthed at him. Here was another proof of the annihilation of distance in these go-ahead days. I had last seen that portly figure rising on the back benches of the House of Commons when Gladstone ruled the roast, and Lowe, Childers, Coleridge, and Cardwell sat on the Treasury seat. It was either the member for Lambeth or his ghost, and the first greeting convinced me that it was the hon. gentleman in the substantial flesh. Finding he was about to pay a visit of ceremony to a native chief, our party resolved to swell his train.

The old chief, though aware of the coming of the English legislator, was found unprepared when the proper moment came. I strongly suspect he was cooking potatoes when the deputation were announced, for as we stood in front of his wharre we observed him, seven-eighths naked, slink round a fence at the rear, and make surreptitiously for the hut. But when he caught sight of us he proudly drew himself up, moderated his pace, and strode gravely by us without appearing conscious that there were such people in the world. I have reason to believe that he was an artful old humbug, but I must declare him the essence of natural dignity, and he had a really grand demeanour, spite of his leathery old skin and spindly old shanks. At length we were summoned to the interview. Mr. McArthur entered first, stooping humbly to get through

the doorway, which, according to Maori custom, would scarcely admit a child in an upright position.

The old chief was squatting on a mat. He had draped himself as rapidly as effectively, and quite awed us by his ceremonious politeness. Some of us had given him tobacco only the other day, and looked upon him as a sort of vagabond, and now he majestically waved us into his dwelling, and made us feel in twenty seconds that in this connection we were the vagabonds. So we stood, hat in hand, and the M.P. made him a kindly, sensible speech, which was duly interpreted, we meantime studying our native aristocrat, and observing that his face was tattooed into a perfect exhibition of arabesque work; he had a splendid head and features, and his presence was naturally commanding. He was gracious to his principal guest, and invited him to share the rug. Mr. McArthur "flopped"—as Mr. Cruncher used to say in the "Tale of Two Cities"—at once, and tried to look as comfortable as if he were in the great gilt and velvet chair of honour at the Mansion House. As time wore on, I noticed that the hon. member began to be uneasy. His attention wandered from the chief's oily, wily remarks. He perspired; there was no window, nor any outlet but the lilliputian doorway. He shifted as often as an elderly portly gentleman sitting on the ground, and bound to maintain an upright and dignified position, could do without attracting attention. In a word, the fleas were at him; they had got the better of the fine broadcloth, and were improving the occasion as if they knew they could not lunch off a London alderman and prospective Lord Mayor every day. The interview was very formal, and it concluded by the chief presenting Mr. McArthur with a finely woven native rug. We were afterwards told

that this father of his people had during the morning prowled through the village and visited his subjects, from one of whom he had unblushingly looted the rug in anticipation of the alderman's visit.

The Maori people appear to be very snug in their low, reed-made, smoke-blackened, stuffy, flea-haunted wharres, though they cannot all boast possession of three rusty muskets and a polished paddle, as can their chief. Out of doors they sit on the warm flagstones over the hot springs when it is cold; they slip off their garments a dozen times a day and step down into the bathing pools, men and women together, and sit immersed to the neck for hours, and I never passed a pool containing Maori matrons and maids without being genially invited to make one of the number. They cook their meals in Nature's kettle, and they get their food, without much trouble, from Nature's stores—potatoes from their little gardens, crayfish from the lake, and also fish. They have a keen appreciation of the Prussian carp, which have been acclimatized in Rotorua, and more's the pity, seeing that they catch the smallest fish, which come into the warm shallow water near the springs, and which are turned from their original blue to pink and white. I have a vivid remembrance of a very tall, stately Maori, blanket wrapped round him, toga fashion, stalking solemnly home after a morning's sport, with a three-inch carp carefully threaded through the gills upon a slip of willow, and dangled ostentatiously from his right hand.

And we saw the Maori dance, called a haka, and had also to pay for it heavily. The old chief was there, dignified as ever, and not overburdened with clothes. The entertainment took place in the large Maori meeting-house, whose carved front stared with the customary

goggle eyes, was surmounted by the customary effigy, and furnished with the customary bell near the entrance. Candles, stuck with their own grease upon sticks planted in the ground, lighted the spacious gloomy interior, to which there was the door entrance only. There were about forty performers, laughing and shouting at the top of their voices and making a veritable Babel. By-and-by a humpbacked official, something between a medicine man and a secretary, bawled out the names, to which the owners responded, and the scribe ticked them off in a note-book with great effusion. The front row consisted of about twenty women, young and old, good-looking and ugly; in the back rows were men and boys. The women were nicely dressed, and in all their finery; the central couple, plump young parties with white muslin bodices and short scarlet petticoats, were the principal performers, and they had taken great pains to decorate their wavy blue-black hair with flowers. Save the legs, which were quite bare below the knee, these women were less exposed than European ladies in evening attire. The men had blankets twisted round their loins. The haka may be roughly described as a concert in character. It is an old Maori custom, an amusement to which the young people used to come decked out with feathers and flowers and war paint. Love or war is the general burden of this song in character, and probably our guide was wise when he recommended us not to inquire too literally into the meaning of what we heard.

It was a singular performance. An excited conductor, with a great flourish of his hands, rushed up and down in front of the line, either invoking something or somebody, or animating the performers. Soon he clapped his hands and beat his naked breast. This was

tantamount to the tap of the baton on the music-stand. The performers, who had been squatting in disorder on the floor, now sprang to their feet, and formed in capital line, eyes to the left. The conductor, as I will term him, continued his promenade in front of the line, walking and talking quickly. He was reciting a poem, and at the end of each line the performers, at first softly, chanted a response, simultaneously beating time on the ground with the right foot, which was gracefully advanced, and by a clapping of the hands. As the fugleman worked himself almost frantic the performers got excited too; the movement with hand and foot quickened and strengthened; and at intervals the performers shouted a deep-drawn and prolonged "Hah-hah-ah," accompanied by a quivering outward and upward movement of the hands. The strict time of the chant was never lost, and when the movement was at its height the excitement was catching. The movement and sound swept you along with it. It suggested inspiration, respiration, and perspiration. The bodies of the performers swayed and twisted, and represented a variety of movements, some of them assuredly deserving of all the hard things said of them. The two leading women were admirable actresses, throwing themselves heart and soul into the spirit of whatever was going, becoming positively ecstatic when the topic was love, and hideously furious in war. But they looked wonderfully handsome—at a distance; their big eyes were black as night; their teeth would be a fortune to a dentist. Still we were very glad when the haka was over, though the performers were quite ready to continue for another two hours. The Queensland gentleman to whom I referred in the previous chapter as having some unpleasant experience of the Wairoa

boatmen, had also seen a haka; it was in some more remote village on the banks of Rotorua, and on that occasion, he tells me, the performers got so excited that, irrespective of sex, they gradually cast aside their clothing as song and bodily movement increased, until the whole company had not between them garmenture equal in dimensions to a moral pocket-handkerchief.

It would be grievous to leave this district without referring to the popular Maori legend of Hinemoa and her lover. There, in the middle of Rotorua, stands the island Mokoia, where the lover sweetly played his seductive flute; there are the waters over which the amorous piping echoed, and through which the lovelorn damsel swam in fervent response. Two reflections force themselves upon you touching this Maori "yarn:" it must have been a powerful flute to have been heard so far; and the young woman did nothing remarkable in thus swimming across to the man of her choice. Other young persons, who are *not* savages, do hardier and—shall it be said?—shadier things, to compass the same kind of ends, every day. So, at last, farewell to the lake district; but let it be clearly understood that I have left many of its sights untouched and unmentioned, only pretending to describe what came under my own observation. If a complete list of lakes, and springs, and wonders is required, as I said in my first chapter, there are guide-books.

In the North Island the railways are at present fragmentary, but the Government propose, as money is available, to fill up the gaps and form an unbroken line 476 miles in length from Wellington round the west coast to Auckland. Meanwhile the sea is the easiest, if not the only, way of travelling. From Tauranga you sail due east until you turn the corner at

East Cape, and then, following the trend of the coast, south-west to Cape Palliser, where you round a sharp corner again, and steer somewhere about nor'-west-and-by-nor' to Wellington.

During the day, supposing you sail from Tauranga in the morning, Poverty Bay is reached, and the anchor is cast for communication with Gisborne, the little squatter township, whither comes for shipment the wool grown on the fine grazing country at the back, upon which, the fern having been originally burnt off, English grasses are sown, and thrive almost better than they do in England. A gentleman informed me that his land carried six sheep to the acre; and that, the feed being too rich for merinos, the squatters everywhere preferred Leicesters and Lincolns. Here, as at Tauranga—and by anticipation I may add everywhere in New Zealand—land was fetching surprisingly high rates, and the colonists were living in hopes that before long there would be better facilities for acquiring land. Old colonists in New Zealand, as elsewhere, are divided amongst themselves upon the land question, and a wandering outsider is not, of course, able to form a competent opinion; but on every hand I certainly heard lament of the obstacles to acquisition of land from the natives. In this bay the whalers—the rollicking, hard-drinking, Maori-marrying fellows from Botany Bay, who founded laws of their own, and invented a mixed language known as whalers' Maori—had important stations. The town of Gisborne, thriving and respectable, stands at the head of a pretty bay, with a high rampart of hills in the rear. It is of sufficient importance to attract good theatrical and operatic companies, and from our steamer we lowered, in the chair by which passengers are here transhipped, an entire opera troupe.

Hawke Bay comes next, with Napier as its capital. Its back country also is grazing country *par excellence*, some choice runs carrying ten sheep to an acre. Six make a very common average, and the sheep run so much to fat that boiling down for tallow is extensively and profitably practised. I heard of a sheep weighing a hundredweight which yielded scarcely thirty pounds of honest lean meat. Napier is another well-to-do town; small, but select, as the hotels, the shops, the club, and the public buildings, by their outward and inward semblance, tell you. The fact is, Napier is the depôt of a great grazing and agricultural district, and wealthy squatters patronize it. From Napier runs a railway sixty miles south, through a busy farming country. It is a brisk place of business. Some commercial travellers, including two Americans (I often, by the way, met commercial travellers from the United States in New Zealand), departing from the town, rubbed their hands contentedly as they conned their order books; and when farmers or commercial travellers do not grumble, depend upon it they have good cause for contentment. Napier, like Gisborne, publishes its morning and evening papers.

Inside Cape Palliser there lay the *Carlotta*, barque, fast upon the rocks. She had met with adverse weather at this noted entrance to Cook Strait, and foiled in beating in, had gone ashore during the thickness of a dark night. I saw the wreck, masts all standing, from the deck of the *Taranaki*, and within a month the *Taranaki* herself was totally lost by running, during a fog, into one of the multitude of islands that lie off the New Zealand coast. Meanwhile in the South Island there was another large vessel ashore.

By this time the traveller down the coast has become

accustomed to its bold scenery; accustomed but not tired, however. Cook Strait has an interest of its own, thanks to its history, its position, and its natural beauty. And it gives Wellington a noble harbour which, considering also the central position of the city as regards the entire colony, one would think justified the choice of Wellington as capital. Never, at the same time, must it be forgotten that, though Auckland was the first seat of Government, Wellington—or Port Nicholson, as it was then named (after the owner of a Sydney ship which discovered it)—was the first *bonâ fide* settlement. It was not precisely the description of settlement which we can now remember without shame, though some would perhaps argue that if the natives allowed themselves to be cajoled into parting with territory as large as Ireland in exchange for pots, soap, red nightcaps, shaving-brushes, jew's-harps, sealing-wax, cartridge paper, umbrellas, and the like, together with axes, fish-hooks, and guns and ammunition, which were afterwards used against the colonists themselves, it was fair for the New Zealand Company to cajole and acquire. However, it was done, and Wellington is the empire city, jealously regarded by Auckland, which it supplanted, and Dunedin, which is well aware, and makes no secret, of its superiority, physically and commercially.

Wellington, doubtless, is surrounded by hills on all sides except that which is open to the sea, and there is naturally a feeling of being shut in. But it has a fine situation; it is healthy, and it is compact. Wellington is pretty as seen from the sea; equally pretty viewed from its ascending environs. At Auckland I was assured many a time that Wellington was ugly, unhealthy, walled in from heaven's free light and air,

and a place rather to shudder at than to see. Nay, a Wellington gentleman himself told me so. At Wellington, on the other hand, I was told in confidence that Auckland was the windiest, wettest, muggiest, mosquitoest town in New Zealand, and that, whenever a specially unpleasant morning dawns, a not uncommon greeting is—

"Good morning. Regular Auckland day, isn't it?"

As a matter of fact, I found Wellington, not a beautiful, but a pretty and most agreeable city. It cannot be denied, I suppose, that it is windy, but statistics show that the average of gales and boisterous weather is not greater than in other New Zealand seaports. As a joke, the saying—"If ever you see a man clapping his hand to his hat when he turns a street corner, be sure he is a Wellingtonian"—may pass current; but not as a serious statement. I suspect all New Zealand is windy, and that each town and district gets its turn of storm and tempest. For myself, I must adhere to my old motto, and speak as I find. Wherefore, the climate, during my brief stay, was bracing and delightful; neither too much wind nor sun, and no rain —and a man must be hard to please, and ungrateful to boot, who could not find compensation for the admitted drawbacks in the suburbs, and in the harbour and its views.

CHAPTER VII.

WELLINGTON TO PORT LYTTELTON.

Wellington and suburbs—A winsome view—Atmospheric effects—Eden on the premises—An ideal public park—Enterprise of the empire city—Largest wooden building in the world—Sir George Grey—No earthquake—A thoroughly bad night—Glimpse of Southern Alps—Port Lyttelton—Climbing the hill—Plains and pilgrims—The French at Akaroa.

If Wellington could be seen from a balloon, its configuration would resemble that of a dumb-bell, the straight connecting centre being Lambton Quay, and the swelling masses at either end the suburbs, which are increasing with great rapidity. What little level ground there was to occupy was soon built upon, and, at considerable expense and with perfect success, the Government have recently reclaimed a fine area of foreshore at the seaward end of the town. But the houses are pushing further and further up the sides of the hills; and, though you cannot so much here as at Dunedin look from your garden path down your neighbour's chimney and discover what he has for dinner, you may, in a very short space of time, raise yourself high above the turmoil of town life, and place the city and the harbour beneath you. At first the inevitable hills are tiresome to a person who has been

accustomed to fairly level streets, and he will feel often in the humour for wondering why the founders of the city did not select a site that would admit of considerably more than one or two leading thoroughfares being on the flat. Use, however, is everything, and with the exception of one place, at which the reader shall arrive in due time, it might be literally said of all the New Zealand towns which I have visited that they were cities set upon hills, and could not be hid.

The visitor ought to resist any inclination he might feel to decline the hilly walks of the suburbs. Without pushing up and about wherever possible, his knowledge of the city and its environs will be incomplete; and, doubtless, it is the persons who set their faces against the hills, and stick, year in and year out, to the water's edge, who complain in the manner described in the previous chapter that Wellington is shut in. There is one interesting walk to the reservoir in which the water coming from the other side of the hills is stored—a road winding up a gorge, through which a brook runs its devious course, and which offers many good specimens of ravine scenery. At the upper end, small cottages, with carefully tended flower and vegetable gardens, are perched wherever they can find foundation room, representing a new hillside community who fell in love with the picturesqueness and healthiness of the situation and forthwith settled there. In another direction, starting from Lambton Quay, half an hour's zigzagging brings you to a natural resting-place—a plateau of soft turf overlooking the Hutt end of the port. To this eminence I was dragged one evening by a friend who was, if one may borrow the expression, a very demon for walking.

For the first ten minutes I railed at the hilly ground,

and hated Wellington and all its belongings. Then I began to recover wind, to get over the leg-weariness, and to notice the thoroughly English-looking shrubberies and flower gardens, cool and alive with laurel, laurestinus, myrtle, and rose, and brilliant with many coloured flower-beds. The larks sprang up at our feet as we ascended clear of the houses; finches talked and sang to each other in the blossoming gorse; there were daisies and clover-blossoms by the wayside; the earth smelt sweet with the savour peculiar to the time of the year when the shoots of grass, herb, and tree are tender. At each angle of the road, harbourward, the scene was always new, changing abruptly, perhaps, from the busy wharf, with its warehouses and shipping, surmounted by a thicket of spars tapering up into the clear atmosphere, to the open roadstead, with its occasional snow-white sail, its wheeling sea-birds, and its hilly bulwarks. At the top, no longer puffing and peevish, I hated neither the demon walker nor his favourite Wellington, but, on the contrary, sat down and offered the incense of a full pipe and contented soul to the winsome view. Now, I could understand that the marvellous colouring of certain pictures I had seen of New Zealand was not the exaggeration we in the old country used to believe it to be. Just for a quarter of an hour, while the sun was getting behind his nightly curtain of hills, and the breeze fainted and died, the distant land and water were beautified by tints which the majority of stay-at-home Englishmen will believe to the end of their lives to be impossible—mere artists' fancies. My friend gave me to understand that what I admired was unworthy of remark in comparison with the gorgeous hues sometimes seen. It may have been so. But I saw enough to convince me that Mr. Chevalier was

right, and that the sceptics who, in London, would smile wisely at his painting, as due entirely to his imagination, were presumptuous and ignorant. Afterwards, further south, I saw far more beautiful atmospheric effects, strengthening this conviction; but at Wellington it came upon me for the first time, and is here recorded both on that account and to show that the evening walk, which began in anything but a pleasant frame of mind, repaid me much more than I deserved.

The Botanical Gardens at Wellington, it seemed to me, were not appreciated as they should be by the inhabitants, who, as a matter of fact, know little about them. This partly arises from the distance of the grounds from the centre of the city, and from the hilly nature of the best parts. A visitor strolls through the principal entrance, saunters along the gravel walk and back again, and then gets him home to pooh-pooh the gardens root and branch. He could not, perhaps, do otherwise, seeing that he had stood only upon the threshold. The small portion laid out upon the regulation ideas of gardening was remarkable for nothing but its commonplace character. The New Zealand colonist loves his garden. Nature offers him every encouragement, and is his most accommodating gardener. The cottager and the man of means seem everywhere, according to their degrees, to have their own Eden on the premises. The general result, of course, must be a refining influence upon the people; but it also makes the dweller in a land where nature is an obstructive terribly envious. The excellent private gardens around Wellington, inducing also a critical spirit, led me at first to pooh-pooh the Botanical Gardens like the rest. It struck me forcibly that the

promoters did not half live up to their privileges. But this was a hasty impression, corrected by a little exploration.

In the course of time these Wellington Botanical Gardens will be unique in their sylvan loveliness. Typical native trees will stand side by side with the best forest types of Europe and America, occupying ground not only friendly, but arranged without hands in the best possible manner for displaying them to advantage. It is a vast domain (already amounting to over a hundred acres, and destined for enlargement as opportunity offers) of gentle knoll, abrupt declivity, and bold summit, communicating with each other by sequestered dingles, leafy bowers (into which the sunbeams slant with apology, rather than smite with strength), tangled profusion of undergrowth, hiding what ought to be hidden with a covering that is always suitable and faultless, and cool grots where the rare and manifold ferns of the country strike ready root, and song-birds seek inspiration. How many miles I wandered through little undulating labyrinthine pathways, with branches murmuring overhead, and ground-growths of every description brushing the feet, I could not compute; nor the number of miniature glens and dells, with never a glimpse or sound of the outer world. Art here had only been brought in to assist nature, and that so sparingly that evidence of artificial aid there was none—which is the perfection of art. A little shovelling on a hillside, a rustic bridge over a streamlet here, a little clearance through the bush there, had been enough to secure as nearly an ideal public park as can be imagined. The work had been done by an artist in woodcraft, rather than a florist tainted with modern conventionalities. And

long may the ordinary genius of improvement be kept away from the place!

It was a public holiday when I strolled over these so-called gardens, and on arriving at the seat on the highest ground of the Domain I could see the public sauntering in the corner where the every-day gardener had planned his gravel drive and dug his formal beds. If they were satisfied, so was I; but, if their ordinary visits are confined to that level promenade, they lose the best thing Wellington can offer them as employment for holiday leisure. Turning suddenly round a sweep in one of the hillside paths, on the edge of which had been passed in review young oaks, ash, sycamore, laburnum, hawthorn, Californian, Scotch, and English firs, and innumerable other transplants, healthily hastening, according to their kind, to maturity, we came upon a picnic party the elders of which were sitting under the shelter of a copse, while the youngsters danced or played at hide-and-seek upon an open space of close crisp sward, the glow of health in the cheeks of all. It was a study worthy of a Watteau. With this exception we did not, through the entire afternoon, meet with half a dozen persons, and I heard sufficient, subsequently, to compel the fear that the majority of the inhabitants for whom the gardens are maintained are practically unacquainted with them.

The empire city, in its streets and houses, looks comfortably prosperous, and in some matters moves with an enterprise not known on the Australian continent; always excepting Melbourne. It could still boast of possessing the only street steam-tramway in the southern hemisphere; and you could, without hustling your neighbour or being suffocated, ride three miles for threepence. The local authorities, however,

were beginning to remind the proprietors that they undertook to emit no smoke, and to suggest the desirableness of stopping only at specified points on the route. It was marvellous, nevertheless, to observe how quickly the locomotive could be stopped. A week or so before I arrived at Wellington, a child ran across the road when the engine was close upon it, but the train was brought to a standstill within a few yards, and the child, though knocked down, received no damage beyond shaking and fright. The wooden houses, of which Wellington is mostly composed, so closely resemble stone and stucco that the stranger unacquainted with the fact at first refuses to believe in their woodenness. The architecture of the public buildings is tasteful, and the coating of sand and size is an ornament alike to cornice, column, and wall. The cathedral, for instance, standing on the higher ground, with its flying buttresses and Gothic ornamenture, is a very handsome building, and looks so like stone that it might deceive a stonemason.

The Government offices are in one gigantic block, said to be the largest wooden building in the world. There is an advantage, of course, in having your army of civil servants in one camp, but, in the eventuality of fire, separate blocks would be, one would think, preferable, and the constant traffic through the long corridors of the three floors must be very trying for a delicately nerved draftsman, accountant, or clerk. Each room is numbered. The ministers, of course, have the lowest figures painted upon their doors; and the messengers at the central offices on each story direct the inquirer to the person he seeks. I presume the civil servants here do not disgrace the traditions of their calling; for I remarked that at half-past four

the reverberation of the clock was still in the air when they came trooping out of their huge barracks. The ministers of the Crown have private furnished residences in addition to their salaries, and these are generally ample villas within enviable grounds. The New Zealand members are paid what is called "honorarium," amounting to a little over two hundred pounds a year, and those who require it are conveyed to their homes in the *Hinemoa*, a fine ocean steamer belonging to the Government. The Parliament buildings are remarkably plain.

As to politics I forbear. They never had an attraction for me, nor do I understand them. I believe some people do; at least, they say so. All I would venture to remark is that, at present, if you talk New Zealand politics you talk Sir George Grey, and if you mention his name—say in a club, or a steamboat saloon, or in a railway carriage—you at once throw a bombshell into the company. It is, however, generally admitted that Sir George is an extraordinary man, an orator of a high class, and so mixed up with New Zealand affairs from the infancy of the colony that his biography would be its completest history.

Wellington I had to leave without feeling an earthquake, the possibility of which does not seem to trouble the inhabitants to the extent of interfering with their sleep or pleasures, or preventing some of them building with brick; without travelling to Featherstone by Fell's railway—which I should like to have done in remembrance of long ago spending a day or two with Mr. Fell himself on the Derbyshire Peak, and writing the first description of his English experiments with a system which has since conquered the Alps; and without going to Nelson and Picton, which (more

particularly the first named) are said to be the prettiest settlements in the country. Enjoy himself more than I had done from the moment of leaving Sydney, or feel more benefit from cool, brilliant, exhilarating weather, man could not do. But the trout, which were the primary object of my journeying, were ever present to my mind, and trout as yet must be sought in the South or, as it used to be called, Middle Island. Therefore I had to place Nelson, and Picton, and the earthquake, and the Hutt railway, with Lake Taupo, the overland trip, and some other matters, on the list of undone things. But I did get a sample of the wind of the country.

Great was the contrast between the peaceful calm of the evening when the waters of the harbour were disturbed by a playful zephyr only and from our turfy plateau we watched the changing hues of the opposite hills, and the afternoon when I sailed out of Cook Strait in the *Lady-bird*. In one given year it was found that the calm days were—Dunedin ninety-eight, Christchurch ten, Auckland nine, Wellington two, Invercargill and Nelson *nil*. If the register for 1878 was the same, I must have had one-half of Wellington's calm weather.

The boisterous day at the end of my stay made full amends. If it blows hard in Cook Strait it must be either from the north-west or south-east, and mine was a true nor'-wester. It was more than a gale; on land it was a hurricane, judging by the accounts afterwards appearing in the papers. The *Lady-bird* rode like a duck before it, though a more uproarious tumbling night I had not enjoyed for many years. The *Carlotta*, barque, over which the foam was flying in clouds as we passed, went to pieces before morning. At the

mouth of the strait a small schooner was standing off and on as well as she could, waiting for an opportunity of getting in, and when the *Lady-bird* was abreast of her her jib was blown clean away in an instant. The little craft's decks were swept by every sea, and she afterwards figured in the newspaper reports of the tempest as a miraculous escape. As night was closing in we met the *Hinemoa* plodding slowly in the teeth of the storm; and the presence on board of Lord Normanby and his suite did not keep her from dipping her official nose into the seas and taking in tons of water over her bows. Everybody said it was a thoroughly bad night—even for Cook Strait.

The gale blew itself out, as the worst gale will do, and the morning was comparatively quiet. Sunrise introduced us to the first glimpse of the Southern Alps, the backbone of the mountains running through the South Island and culminating in the centre of the island in Mount Cook, 13,200 feet high. The range, as we saw it, was under eight thousand feet, but the gorges glistened white with snow, and occasionally the shoulders of some dominating peak were trimmed with ermine of the same. We had a good view of the Kaikoura mountains, an inland range, and of its lions, Mount Alarm (9300 feet) and Mount Odin (9700 feet), pure-headed with their eternal snow. As usual, fine coast scenery was never lacking throughout the day, and Port Lyttelton heads were made by the afternoon.

Port Lyttelton is a very decided arm of the sea, with decided bluffs at its entrance; sheltered too with high land on either side, and having an unexceptionable roadstead. Lyttelton is a bright-looking little town, stretched along the hillside, and separated from Christchurch by a ridge of mountain pierced by a mile and

three-quarters of railway tunnel, of which any colony might be proud. It is the outlet to the fertile Canterbury province, the place of export for the corn and wool of a magnificent agricultural district. Large sums of money have been expended in its breakwater and inner harbour, until the railway trucks come close to the ship's side. The facilities for loading and unloading at Port Lyttelton may be imagined from the circumstance that last season a barque, laden with corn and wool, was unloaded and at sea within a fortnight. There was an air of business about the place that would be surprising without the explanation of its intimate connection with the whole province. It happened to be Saturday afternoon when I landed, and that may have accounted for the crowds of well-dressed, fresh-looking people laden with marketings discharged by the Christchurch trains. The station appointments, the warehouses, the appliances for shunting and shipping were most finished; all that was wanted for the particular business to be accomplished at the port appeared to be there, in order and under control.

In pre-railway days there was a roundabout road to Christchurch, and a bridle-path over the mountain. An obelisk marks the summit, and the summit is reachable by a stiffish pull up the bridle-path. Lyttelton town may soon be exhausted, and it has nothing unusual to show when it is exhausted. Mount Cook, at Auckland, I remembered, gave me liberal exchange for my labour, and it occurred to me while waiting here that something worth having might be obtained at the cost of an hour and a half's labour in ascending Port Hill. Half-way up—the neat cottages and gardens having, as I expected, challenged admiration on the way—I summoned a halt, and obeyed the summons.

The ascent had been sharp, and I now seemed to look down direct upon the decks of the ships, reduced to canoe size. The inlet looked long and narrow from this height; the vessels riding at anchor in the roadstead were toys; and the lines of breakwater and inner harbour were mapped out on the water like tracings on a sheet of paper. Here then was an instalment of reward. Once on the summit I was able to write off the total account—with thanks.

It could, from this elevated standpoint, be seen that if the steamer had sailed bodily through the peninsula terminated by Godby Head, it would have cut off a long corner; also, that up the coast we had been nearer Christchurch, as the crow flies, than we were at Lyttelton railway station. To the right was the sea-shore; to the left the mountain range obstructed a sight of Banks Peninsula. In front, from mountain to shore, and beginning at the base of the mountain, which sharply fell to their boundary in this direction, the Canterbury plains stretched away. Christchurch was a cluster of shining houses, a fair speck upon the vast flat. It seemed as flat as a table; more accurately plains than anything I had seen before bearing the name. The course of a river running to the sea was marked by a green fringe, of willows and flax no doubt; and there were belts of trees—perhaps extensive scrub, perhaps small plantations; visible spots, at any rate, on an otherwise unbroken level that seemed to have no limit. To the eye it had no limit but the sky, which met and absorbed it without showing any demarcation. Till now New Zealand had been mountain, fern, and forest, or ancient craters converted into great lakes. It now presented itself in another phase, and called to mind the warning of my Wellington friend. Speaking

as one who had his eye mainly on the solid prosperity of the colony, he had said, "You will not see New Zealand till you have been to Canterbury and Otago."

When the emigrants commonly known as the Canterbury Pilgrims landed here to find their Land of Promise, there were neither breakwaters nor railways, and the faint-hearted amongst them must have little relished that tramp over the mountains lying between them and their Goschen. One of the original pilgrims is living in Brisbane at this moment, and memory wrenched him like toothache as he told me the other day how three journeys over the barrier sufficed to ruin his horse's legs.

Banks Peninsula is a curious mountainous excrescence of volcanic origin, containing some beautiful bays, of which the principal are Port Lyttelton (the most northerly), Port Levy, Pigeon Bay, and Akaroa (the most southerly). In the centre of the peninsula the hills are very lofty—from two thousand feet to three thousand feet—sloping gradually down towards the sea to a few hundred feet. This mass of mountains stands all alone, being surrounded by sea and perfectly level plains. Akaroa is the most extensive of all the bays, being some eleven miles in length by as much as three miles in breadth in some parts. There are charming coves on either side from end to end but, like all the other harbours in the peninsula, it is completely shut in by lofty mountains almost entirely covered with dense timber, amongst which black birch of enormous proportions are conspicuous. In rambling over the mountains one gets *above* these immense trees, and looking down upon them can realize their size better than when standing beneath them.

The town of Akaroa is prettily situated in a fine bay

on the right-hand side of the harbour, about six miles from the heads, and is historically more interesting than any other spot, if not in New Zealand, at any rate in the Middle Island. On the upper headland of the bay was first planted the British ensign, some forty years ago, and but for the clever manœuvring of Governor Hobson the island would have been taken possession of by the French. A man-of-war was despatched from France with a number of colonists whom it was intended to settle at Akaroa, and on her way the vessel put in at Auckland, where an English man-of-war was at the time lying. The Governor gave a ball, to which the officers of both ships were invited. The gallant Frenchmen could not keep their secret, for at about midnight his Excellency gave the English captain orders to set sail for Akaroa and take possession of that portion of New Zealand on behalf of Great Britain. A few hours after the arrival of the British vessel, the Frenchman came in, amazed and horrified to find the English flag flying on shore, and his friends of the ball anchored in the bay.

The settlement was, however, formed, and the French man-of-war, whose crew was composed largely of artisans, lay there for three years, putting up buildings for the officials, making roads, etc. Some of the houses constructed by these men contained exquisite work, the different woods having been most artistically arranged into patterns. Unfortunately nothing of this remains now. All has long since perished from neglect. The settlement did not thrive, simply because the life did not suit the people. Land was given to the men on certain conditions—cultivation being the principal one—but scarcely any of the emigrants ever became possessed of nearly the full quantity they might have

won. Up to 1851 none of these French settlers had any legal tenure of the land they held. In that year, however, the Government offered to give to all who would become naturalized Crown grants for such areas of land as they were entitled to under their arrangement with the French authorities. With the exception of one, they all gladly complied with the proposition, and the grants were issued.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTCHURCH ON AVON.

Day of rest—The willow-lined Avon—Useful servant and bad master—Classical Christchurch—Broken promise—Trade and commerce—*Anacharis* again—Canterbury Acclimatization Society—Individual enterprise—Birds acclimatized—Fish and fish licenses—A literary trout—Hard on the stranger—Angling in the Avon—Ordered off.

After the uproar and restlessness of the voyage down the coast, the peacefulness of my first day at Christchurch was balm to the spirit. It was Sunday; rather, using the term in its true sense, it was sabbath—rest. A brisk brief walk before breakfast showed me that I was at last in the most English country I had seen since leaving England; also, that this island was distinctly different from that other island of ferns, forests, volcanic tokens, and Maoris—as different as are the shires by comparison with the mountains and moorlands of Wales or Scotland. The birds carolled clear in the blithe morning; church bells far and near sent their silver music stealing over the broad sunny plains; spires over and out of the tree-tops met the eye in every direction, as became a settlement that had an ecclesiastical infancy but that soon saw other than Church of England edifices established, rivalling them in style of

architecture and substantial wealth; and not a sound from house, shop, or street disturbed the absolute repose of the day. This, I need not remark, was a decidedly agreeable first impression upon which to begin.

During the forenoon a gentleman whose acquaintance I had made in the steamer, and who, requiring no formal introduction, had, in the genuine spirit of hospitality to a stranger, offered to show me something of the place, drove me round the suburbs. We skirted the river Avon, pursuing its placid way past the willows, which, dipping their lissom fingers into the water, essayed, always balked but ever persevering, to hinder its flow; and in the course of an hour we crossed a number of pellucid rills feeding the main stream with contented gurgle. The fields—they were small enough to deserve that rank, rather than that of paddock—were all enclosed with orthodox hedges, and the kine and horses, satiated with plenty, lay almost buried in the high grass which they had been trying in vain to eat down. There was a perpetual soughing amongst the waving poplars and the more prosaic blue gums, introduced to do duty as shelter from the bleak winds. Here again the private gardens were radiant with bloom and vernal life, and the villas and cottages embowered in fragrant foliage; and thus for two hours, through road and lane, between the hedges and trees, we drove, knowing that not so many years ago, when the Canterbury Pilgrims took up their abode in the district, the country was well-nigh treeless.

Very near the city one piece of original bush was preserved, but the rata, and cabbage-tree, and native creepers, instead of putting their acclimatized neighbours out of countenance, seemed themselves the foreigners and intruders, albeit a colony of rooks had

taken possession of their upper branches. It was, in truth, a very English-like outing. I missed, however, the wild flowers which deck our home meadows, and which would be all the more welcome here because the full-bladed grass was of the darkest green. All the British trees were in full maturity and beauty and the oaks and sycamores especially at home. Gorse, sweet-brier, hawthorn, and honeysuckle must be taken as a matter of course. You saw them everywhere, and at one point of our drive where these summer witnesses were in force, through a break in a plantation of magnificent Californian firs, we caught a glimpse of distant snowy mountains. The furze around Christchurch, I noticed, was kept well under, and therefore it made splendid hedges. It is a useful servant but a bad master, and in Tasmania and New Zealand the farmers who have allowed it to run riot rue the day when it was planted.

Yet, personally, I would not care to live in Christchurch, with all its advantages. The surrounding country is too flat; the winds, I should imagine, would be too obstreperous, the dust too intrusive. Beyond the suburbs lines of poplars and blue gums shield the fields to a great extent, at the same time giving a Dutch-like appearance to the whole landscape. But nothing can prevent a blustering gale ramping and roaring headlong over the plains; and I found, in broken branches and split Lombardy poplars on every hand, evidences of that gale through which the *Lo'y-bird* danced in Cook Strait. Christchurch is nevertheless a remarkably fine city, with superior public buildings and long, wide, well-kept streets; and it has, not only in its nomenclature but in the composition of some of the buildings along the river, the classical

flavour of a university city. But the unfinished cathedral is a strange comment upon its Church of England origin. There it stands, as it has stood for years, promise of an edifice worthy of that origin, but promise broken and unfulfilled, conveying a moral which many gentlemen with whom I conversed read with considerable bitterness.

Probably few persons would agree with my objection to flat country, when it is a country that, to the agriculturist, drops with fatness; or to a city of plains, when that city is a vast garden, and an important commercial centre to boot. Were I, for example, a partner in the firm which had just received a consignment of five hundred reaping and binding machines from America, as an ordinary business transaction, and with the knowledge that other firms imported the same articles, I should doubtless consider Christchurch the city of cities.

And if the reader will step with me for a few minutes into the railway station, and take note of the tale of traffic it tells, he too may think substantial trade and commerce a fair set-off against a sentimental preference for less monotonous surroundings. In the grain store of a private firm adjoining the yard, there can be discharged out of the train three hundred tons per day, the elevator and other machinery being worked by a gas engine, at a cost of about three shillings per day. In April (the middle of the grain season) there were in this granary twenty-five thousand sacks of wheat, oats, and barley at one time—all from the province of Canterbury, or country north of Timaru, and all destined for shipment at Port Lyttelton. On one of the floors you may observe a collection of bales bound with hoop-iron. They contain seven hundred

and fifty thousand new sacks just received from Calcutta, in readiness for the incoming harvest. This mentioned, as an instance which happens to come in my way of the magnitude of the business done, I may add, with reference to railway matters, that, attached to the station, there are a benefit society of fifteen hundred members, an *employés'* library, and a brass band. There are acres of workshops and sheds, and the practical outcome of this organization is a first-class railway. The long carriages open at either end; the guard can, and does, walk through the entire train; and the latest built first-class carriages are fitted with lavatories.

The river Avon flows through the Acclimatization Society's grounds. Its banks are densely fringed with full-grown willows, and it is just such a clear sober stream as its English namesake at Salisbury. The ubiquitous *anacharis*, foolishly introduced by a person who fancied it was good feed for fish, is as usual tyrannous, and the watercresses have become a nuisance. The Avon is the chief attraction of the gardens, and "a thing of beauty and joy for ever" to the inhabitants. When they are tired of the gardens proper, they can cross a bridge and thread the mazes of a young plantation the other side, and, sitting under leafy canopies, dangle their feet in the water-weeds and watch the dragon-flies. There is one corner of the Domain not open to the public, but it is the most charming of all. I spent a long and pleasant afternoon there, with two or three gentlemen interested in acclimatization, thankful that the mower's scythe, and the delver's spade, and the gardener's pruning-knife had not been there. Knee-deep in grass and clover, we went the round of the trout-ponds and breeding-houses,

pushed our way through sapling and shrub to the aviaries, fed and stroked the Tasmanian 'possum, prodded the ferrets with a stick, and paid our dutiful respects to the pheasants and fancy waterfowl.

New Zealand is first on the list of acclimatizing countries, and we may, without being invidious to the other provincial bodies, take the work of the Canterbury Acclimatization Society as a type of what has been done throughout the colony; always, however, bearing in mind that success would have been impossible but for the individual enterprise of gentlemen who spent money and gave labour in the cause. To them the New Zealand sportsmen owe the good pheasant and partridge shooting at their disposal, the coursing prospects of the future, and the magnificent trout-fishing of the present.

The annual reports of the society, fourteen in number, show how gradual were the steps made. From them you learn the yearly growth of the trout in the ponds. The council, in one report five years ago, assure their supporters that pheasants are spreading so rapidly in the province that, if unmolested, they will soon be sufficiently numerous to justify the issue of licenses to shoot the male birds. The progress of rooks and jackdaws, thrushes and blackbirds, is anxiously and hopefully described; a large flock of starlings seen about Riccarton have a paragraph to themselves; chaffinches are said to be common; but the untimely decease of several goldfinches is deplored, while the hope is expressed that the residue are somewhere in flesh and feather, doing good service amongst the thistles. After careful consideration the following birds and animals were selected as the most desirable for further introduction:—Forty hares, fifty

pairs of partridges, twenty pairs of rooks, twenty pairs of lapwings, twenty pairs of golden plover, four pairs of English wild duck and mallard, four pairs of English widgeon, six pairs of robins, nine dozen yellow-hammers, six dozen goldfinches, six dozen hedge-sparrows, six dozen tomtits, six dozen wheatears, three dozen blackbirds, two dozen thrushes, three dozen furzechats, three dozen water-wagtails, three dozen bramblefinches; to which were afterwards added a few brace of black-game and grouse, some lobsters, crabs, oysters, and humble bees, the latter being most valuable for the fertilization of red clover. These aims have now been achieved—some of them, unfortunately, with a success which the husbandman deprecates. An income is already made out of shooting and fishing licenses.

The operations of this and kindred societies, however, should not cease until every stream in New Zealand is stocked with trout. There is some talk of making an attempt to acclimatize grouse, but it is not explained how the grouse are to live without heather. In everything but the heather there is excellent grouse country in both islands. English perch and tench were introduced, but not apparently with as much success as in Tasmania. Tench would do well in some of the northern lakes, and perch in the southern waters; but the specimen of the latter we netted at Christchurch was long, thin, and sickly coloured. When all the rivers of New Zealand are stocked with trout the colony will supply angling for the entire southern hemisphere. At present the few rivers that are fishable are in danger of being overfished, and will be overfished unless the licenses prohibit all baits but minnow and fly, care being taken to insist that neither a grasshopper nor a beetle is a fly.

I care not for the smile which flits across the non-angler's face—perhaps an unhappy citizen who never saw a trout—when I declare that the first specimen I saw in the Avon made my pulses throb again. I saw him from a bridge near a mill, in the bright shallow water, and his poised fins and shapely body moved me, as if he were a trumpet-call and I an old war-horse. Every object in the bed of the river could be seen with distinctness—old tin cans, kettles, potsherds, and the familiar *débris* which finds lodgment in any town stream. Under the willows there lay upon the bottom a land-surveyor's doorplate, the name and profession of the gentleman, though subject to perpetual rinsing, so plain that he who ran might read. Cautiously from under the willow boughs emerged master brown trout, moving gently up stream till he came to the doorplate, and paused there. A literary trout evidently, for I saw him in the same spot the next morning, still apparently engaged in spelling out the inscription. A stalwart patriarchal fish too, not to be tickled by the first comer; moreover, he was lazy and wise, and therefore big, sailing out grandly and slowly from his lodgings for single gentlemen, but never sailing too far for safety. There were many, too many, such trout in the Avon, and they were well-known objects of interest, generally to be found in the same haunts, and, in certain lights, resplendent in bronze and silver inlaid with rubies.

Restraining my impatience no longer, I hurried to the secretary of the Acclimatization Society and paid my pound for a license—in the face of warnings that no fish were then being taken, and spite of my knowledge that it would serve me for not more than two days at the outside. If I had the pleasure of being

a New Zealand sportsman I should not, I dare say, make the privileges of gun and rod too cheap for any chance comer, but the present system of insisting upon a new license in each province is hard upon the stranger. In the case of angling there ought to be other than yearly licenses issued to visitors; that is to say, daily tickets for half a crown, weekly tickets for seven and sixpence, and monthly tickets for fifteen shillings. Such concessions ought not, however, to apply to persons living in the district. The stranger, knowing nothing of the water and its fish, is of course placed at a natural disadvantage, for which these reasonable charges (which are, after all, according to anglers' usage) might be fixed as compensation and encouragement. By this time it is possible that daily, weekly, and monthly tickets have been issued, seeing that the officials listened courteously to my eloquent protests, and smilingly promised reform.

For the fish I caught, I might have spent my license money in other ways. The Avon trout on that summer evening were too wily for me. I shall not offer the usual excuses as to bright water, unsuitable wind, and so on—excuses which the angler has, owing to the capricious nature of the game he pursues, to keep, so to speak, on constant "tap." It was, nevertheless, one of those days when the experienced angler sallies out, knowing full well that he leads a forlorn hope. A glassy surface is not what the fly-fisher likes anywhere, and here the knowing ones prefer ripple, and even stiff breeze, provided it come from the proper quarter. However, the fact remains that I neither killed nor pricked a trout; nor did the five Christchurch brethren of the angle whom I met in altogether too close proximity by the water-side. I espied several patriarchal

trout of the same kidney as the fish that came out every day to the land-surveyor's plate, but they were not likely to be tempted. There are not many reaches of the river open to the public, and they are becoming fewer every year. The Avon narrows very quickly above Christchurch, and the private landowners naturally exercise their rights; they like, at any rate, to be politely asked for the favour of using their land.

In one meadow, in a delightful suburb of heliotropes, roses, and geraniums, I was standing by a local angler —Scotch, for a ducat—plying his double-handed rod. I had put aside my own implement, and in the soft twilight—it was after eight o'clock, and in Australia they would have been lighting lamps at half-past six at that time of the year—was listening to the blackbirds and finches piping their evening hymn in a grove across the stream, and tranquilly musing on the leisurely flow of the river, when we were ordered away as trespassers. There was nothing for it but to retreat, strange as it was to find home customs carried to such an extent in a young colony; but the proprietor of the meadow explained that a couple of pot-hunters had been in the habit of scrambling through the hedge into his flower-garden, and, rather than be balked in casting their bait in the particular eddy they fancied, had trampled down his carnations, and finally smashed a cucumber-frame. We sympathized with him, denounced the trespassers, and, by a few artful references to the sacred right of the landholder, won from him a cordial invitation to remain and kill as many trout as we liked.

CHAPTER IX.

FISHING THE CUST.

Origin of trout—The one-eyed veteran—River Cust—High-class farming—Snow mountains, firm and immutable—One of the right sort—A brawler—Capital gamekeepers—Good sport—Archidiaconal success—A dogmatic fish—"Chop! chop!"—A lazy saunter—A field review—Creation of a yeoman class.

In the upper parts of the river, where it is of only decent brook-like proportions, there are runs and stickles in abundance, but in Christchurch the Avon is not unlike the Itchen below Winchester, requires most careful fishing, and, being the best available water for the town anglers, is regularly whipped, and, I am sorry to add, fished by less artistic methods than whipping. The upper portions are in private property, and kept as such. For these reasons the angling area is restricted. But the trout are there, and it would be better if the big fellows could be thinned out. A youth, while I was in Christchurch, entered a tobacconist's shop (where I was refilling my pouch,) with a grand six-pound fish which he had just taken, with a local whitebait and spinning tackle, in a mill-stream in the heart of the city. He had been persevering after the self-same trout for a fortnight, and had got him at last. In his creel he had also a three-quarters of a pound

beauty, killed with a blue dun. The large trout are generally taken with this small fish called whitebait, with grasshopper, and, for shame be it said, with worms and maggots; but, in justice to the New Zealand anglers it should be said they do not affect unsportsmanlike lures so much as do the Tasmanian men at the Hobart Town end of the island.

The six-pounder bagged by the youth, who brought it in with a rosy flush of triumph that it did one's heart good to behold, was a perfectly proportioned fish, and a Hampshire trout all over. The trout have been brought into New Zealand in so many ways that it is not always easy to trace their birthplace. I have, however, turned up a letter received the year before last from the veteran author and angler, Francis Francis, to whom fish acclimatizers owe so much, in which he says, referring to the New Zealand trout generally: "The ova were chiefly derived from the Wycombe and Alton trout. In both places they reach eight and ten pounds at times, and when we went for spawn at the latter place we took out four at once that went much over thirty pounds."

While upon this subject I must disburden myself of a few additional details to make the history of Canterbury acclimatization complete, and I do so with an apology to the reader to whom they may have no interest. I do so for the information of the few, I am aware; but the many are forewarned, and can jump over the next paragraph, as maybe they have jumped over some of its predecessors. It is a paragraph for which I am indebted to a Christchurch gentleman, who took the trouble to send it to me after my return:—

"Ova of the English brown trout was first introduced into New Zealand in September, 1867, and was

brought over from Tasmania by Mr. A. M. Johnson, the curator of the Canterbury Acclimatization Society, who volunteered to go at his own expense. Only three eggs were, however, hatched, but two of the fish fortunately turned out to be male and female, from which the first increase was obtained at two years old; and for many successive years these fish continued to afford a supply of eggs, till the female died full of years and honour, having furnished a supply of young fish for distribution throughout the country. Their sale realized to the society upwards of one hundred pounds, besides many fish liberated without charge in the public rivers. The old surviving male was duly honoured at the table of his Excellency the Governor during his visit to Christchurch. Other importations of ova were subsequently obtained by the society, but the fish retained for breeding purposes in the gardens were for several years allowed to deposit their spawn in the natural manner, but with very unsatisfactory results; the increase being nearly all obtained from the original pair, which were the only fish subjected for many years to the artificial stripping process, the Salmon Commissioners in Tasmania having so strongly recommended the natural in preference to the artificial mode of culture. A fine buck deer, live perch, with frogs, etc., were also brought over by Mr. Johnson from Tasmania, together with a very large collection of useful and hardy American tree seeds, from plants acclimatized in Tasmania; also water-lilies of the white, yellow, and blue varieties. The credit of the first introduction of English trout and perch is fairly due to Mr. Johnson, who also, after repeated attempts, successfully introduced the ova of the American brook trout—the *Salmo fontinalis*—a beautiful game variety, from which an

increase was obtained last winter; also a cross between this variety and the English trout, whose strong and rapid growth is very noticeable. The chief attraction to visitors at Trout Dale Farm are the American salmon, some ten thousand of which still remain, averaging six inches in length."

There was a famous one-eyed trout, enjoying a reputation amongst all the Christchurch anglers, which just previous to my arrival had met with a most ignominious fate. His demise was a subject of general lament. By fair means and foul he had been angled for from his youth upwards, until he reached the weight of seven pounds, and was grisly about the occiput and shoulders, which was tantamount in his line of life to being grey-headed. Veteran sportsmen who had struggled with the mighty salmon in Loch Tay and slain him, accomplished fly-fishers who could achieve the thistledown trick and circumvent the timid trout when their comrades never moved a fish, acknowledged that he was their master. Theorists thought about him night and day in vain. Young men, regardless of expense, wrote home for costly tackle and the latest improvements. Unprincipled fellows tried to take a mean advantage of his physical infirmity, and literally to get on his blind side. Wives and mothers were kept in perpetual anxiety because their loved ones exposed themselves to the midnight air, and returned depressed and haggard at daylight. It was even said that two friends, the Jonathan and David of the day, had become mortal foes on account of this obstinate brown trout, and that a young lady, catching the prevailing enthusiasm, would accept no offer save from the man who could wage victorious conflict with him. The story as thus told me by a very humorous Christ-

church man was exciting and touching: And one day a cry was heard. Workmen dropped their tools and hurried to the bridge; agitated emissaries were met hastening to the town. A wretched, ragged boy, with a couple of yards of coarse twine, a great rusty hook, a bean stick, and a dirty piece of beef, had approached the popular object in the one unguarded moment of a long and honourable life, and had, with demoniacal whoop, hauled him bodily to bank.

About seven and twenty miles north of Christchurch (northerly at any rate,) is the river Cust, which gives its name to a small railway station. And the Cust is the Christchurch angler's pride and hope. At the earliest opportunity I took the morning train for that goal, scanning the sky and accurately discovering the direction of the wind, after the manner of sportsmen with a long day of magnificent probabilities before them. The outlook from the carriage windows, however, soon absorbed my attention. Clear of the town and its gardens, you are at once surrounded by really high-class farming—high-class as to results, though the unexhausted richness of the soil up to the present, and for some years to come, renders that which a scientific agriculturist would term high-class farming unnecessary. For the first few miles the eye roved over fertile plains, divided into mostly small farms. Turning then to the other side of the carriage, a treat was in store for which I was not at all prepared. It was a portion of the Southern Alps, far off as to actual distance, but apparently near, since the range rose from the plains without any intervening obstacle.

Towards the west, where the mountains were massed into picturesque and broken heads, the snow shone with dazzling brightness—now in streaks indicating deep

ravines, and now in patchy areas where the land was most elevated. The sun had not yet risen high, and the bolder summits, which were entirely covered with snow, were softly tinted like the maiden-blush rose. There is something extremely subduing to the mind in a glimpse, such as this, of those half-concealed upper regions, untrodden, it may be, through all the ages, by human feet. They shine with a glory with which we have nothing to do; they seem to belong to a world apart from ours; they are so near the heavens, and so constantly surrounded and enveloped by fleecy clouds, that they might be the outer portals of that mystic spirit-land where most of us have kindred. For a little while, here and there upon the railway, rows of trees would shut out the distant ranges altogether, but sooner or later they would appear again. The play of the clouds against the sun every moment changed the expression of those sensitive mountain faces, but the idea of their unchangeable solidity was ever present. This, then, was the feeling which half awed and wholly subdued. Other things shifted and vanished; *they* stood firm and immutable, only their eternal mantle of winter showing evidence of passing change.

"A good day, I think, for fishing?"

Thus back from dreamland into "the common day." It was a pleasantly put question from a gentleman sitting in another corner of the carriage, and whom I had not before noticed. Of course, he was an angler, like myself. Amongst anglers there is a lasting and understood sympathy. Our badges—rod and creel—were all the introduction necessary, and forthwith, with a freedom impossible to others than the fraternity of the gentle craft, we were friends. Mutual tastes supplied topics of conversation and comparison; mutual remem-

brances took us back to old country haunts; mutual theories as to the pursuit we both loved furnished food for debate into which ill temper could not intrude. Father Izaak was wont to write of angling as the contemplative man's recreation, yet the whole plan of his quaint, lovable book is based upon its adaptability to companionship. In a few moments I saw that this newly acquired brother of the angle was one of the right sort, and forthwith interpreted his remark upon the suitableness of the day for our pastime into an invitation to comradeship.

Gradually we left the fertile farmland behind us, and traversed sandy wastes, getting out of the train finally on the outskirts of a somewhat dreary level of flax bush. The river Cust twisted through this like a snake, and some of the sinuosities of its course were lost in the ti-tree, flax, and gorse upon its banks. The Cust was as unlike the Avon as it could well be. The Christchurch stream was stately in its flow and respectable in breadth. This was scarcely deserving the name of river. An athletic schoolboy would have cleared its widest part could he have found fair jumping ground; and as to character, it was an undoubted brawler, but could not brawl enough to keep its channel clear of aquatic plants. Yet it had been brought into the service of a mill hidden amongst the willows, and, generally speaking, made up in depth what it lacked in width. It was a difficult river to fish with fly-rod, parts being simply unapproachable, and those parts, of course, being well known and used as certain sanctuary by the trout world.

The Cust contains plenty of trout, and the obstructions on the banks, and weedy cover in the stream, if highly objectionable for other reasons, make capital

gamekeepers. We were a little early in the season for the Cust fish, and no doubt suffered through a strict adhesion to fly-fisher's law. Had the grasshoppers been about, or had we descended to grosser baits than delicately made March browns, alders, duns, and gnats, we might have done better. Mr. B. killed five nice fish, and if he did not kill fifty it was not because he did not work patiently and artistically. From a letter he was kind enough to write me in January, I learn that the sport later in the season was very good. To guide other anglers, who will some day, doubtless, cast their flies on New Zealand waters, I will quote him:—"I have had some splendid fishing in the Cust during the last few weeks, catching from twelve to sixteen pounds of trout per diem; largest fish a little over five pounds. But what do you think I caught them with? Brown live beetle!!! I plead guilty; but there are extenuating circumstances to be urged. I had to consider the brightness of the weather and clearness of the water, and also have some regard for the remaining prospects of the season, which, with artificial fly, would be more and more hopeless, with the grass and bushes almost closing in the stream. The C.'s have had equally good sport."

The trout of the Cust, in a slight degree, may be said to possess the odour of sanctity. The river was originally stocked by an archdeacon. I see nothing incongruous about this. Were not some of the apostles lake fishermen by profession? The venerable archdeacon's enterprise was crowned with distinguished success. Not more than eight years ago he put five and twenty trout into the Cust, and in the fourth year afterwards, so rapid was their multiplication and growth, the water was fit for fishing. The fish were

turned in at the junction of a tributary, and have now spread over about eight miles of water, apparently differing from the archdeacon's choice of head-quarters, and becoming most numerous three or four miles below their point of introduction.

Another correspondent of mine was induced to visit the Cust from my representations, and he has since prefaced a description of the difficulties above enumerated by the statement that in two half-days he managed to kill three brace of good trout with an artificial fly of his own manufacture.

If these trout are somewhat clerical in their character, as they should be from their origin, a big fellow that made me figuratively tear my hair was a leader amongst the dogmatists. Having tried every likely place, working down stream, and catching only two quarter-pounders (returned of course with the utmost consideration), I spiked my rod and sat me down upon a mossy clearing, under an alcove of flax bushes. What a relief to know that in this country, as in Ireland, there were no snakes, and that amidst the hum and buzz and chirp of the prolific insect life around there was not to be heard the shrill, irritating, impertinent, defiant, blood-thirsty trumpeting of the mosquito—that pretty, airy little creature, so engaging in appearance to the public eye, so detestable in action upon the private individual! The flax swords curved eight feet high overhead; the clover blossoms were equal to velvet as a cushion; a pair of chaffinches, two yards off, made open love with a temerity to be accounted for only on the ground that they had faith in my special sympathy or general friendliness; forget-me-nots (fainter and feebler, however, than their English progenitors) twinkled amongst the tender rushes of the margin, keeping their mild blue

eye upon the white blossoms of the cresses, which were encroaching further every day; and, by pushing aside the branches of a flowering ti-tree, when tired of peering into the crystal stream, I could hold communion any time with my friends the mountain ranges. I did hold communion with them, and thought how frowning they might be when wreathed in storm; when

> "The long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,
> And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow."

"Chop! chop!" There was no mistaking the sound. I had not heard it for years, but trout are trout, whether acclimatized by hands secular or hands archidiaconal, and the sounds proceeded from nothing in the world but a trout on feed. "Chop! chop!" a second time—a quiet, smacking, self-gratified utterance, as of a fish that meant business, and was not aware of human presence. Just above where I sat the stream ran deep and comparatively still, and there I saw my gentleman waving his tail and waiting for the next victim—a fine fish, quite a foot and a half in length, and burly in proportion. But there was no ripple from wind or natural agitation of the water. Still the prize was worth a trial; it was, I knew, a desperate remedy to meet a desperate case. Stealthily creeping back from the brink, I selected from my book the biggest fly of the collection—a bloated red palmer, that used to do good execution amongst the Lea chub at Cheshunt. Never believing that, with so much *recherché* food floating down to his chop-chop apparatus, the trout would after all pay me the compliment of his attention, I yet sent the fly over to the further bank, and humoured it till it dropped very naturally upon the stream, a yard above the fish. It looked ridiculously large, but

hairy and warmly coloured. The trout, by an almost imperceptible vibration of tail and fin, betrayed his knowledge of something eligible. In the most leisurely fashion he advanced to meet it, touched it with his nose, and then simply sucked it in. Chop-chop was then on the other side.

The fish must have been astonished at the flavour of the tempting morsel. Firmly hooked, he went down and away like a steam engine, the winch screaming again as the line spun out; and he rushed straight and unchecked into the roots of a flax bush. There was no holding him to prevent this artful movement, and the result may be imagined—a swirl of mud-clouded water, a slackened line, a lost hook, and a lamented fish.

Rambling and gossiping was more, however, to my humour that day than sport—especially indifferent sport—and I sauntered up stream to rejoin the other angler; sauntered through meadow grass brilliant with yellow flowers, over a rustic bridge at the head of the mill race, and through more lush meadow grass, making a cast now and then for the sake of appearance, but oftener permitting the flies to dangle in the air over my shoulder. The mountains were now straight ahead; the wind was rising in their direction. Shadows began to darken the summits; the clouds moved restlessly as if uncertain where to pause, and when at length they selected a peak, settled upon it, and covered its snow-marked ribs and shoulders, the wind howled angrily at their presumption, and, bustling on, chased them, in fleecy fragments, out of sight.

But where would end the record of a lazy saunter like this? Or who would take an interest in the gushing gossip of the man who for the moment is at heart a

boy let loose in the fields? What are grass, flowers, birds, bees, fish, streams? You cannot get crushings out of them like quartz. They are not marketable like scrip. Yet they have their gold, and they yield their dividends, the one without costly machinery, the other without bulling and bearing. Wherefore let us be content.

By-and-by the two anglers met some distance up the stream, resting in a sheltered spot under a hedge o'ertopped by willows. The mill-wheel droned within earshot, and the ripple of the little Cust was chastened music in a plaintive minor key. Beyond the reach of our eye, larks were soaring and pouring forth floods of melody. The wind, risen now to some strength, bent the heads of the tall grass, and caused many a sudden shiver to run across the fields. Towards the mountains we could see a farm, environed on one side with blue gum, on the other with poplar trees. We could literally apply Tennyson here:—

> "Hard by a poplar shook alway,
> All silver-green with gnarlèd bark;
> For leagues no other tree did mark
> The level waste, the rounded gray."

What we had done, seen, and thought since, in the morning, we divided the stream into equal portions and separated accordingly, was passed in review. He had seen two cock pheasants—Chinamen—fighting furiously. I had disturbed a brood of young wild ducks, which had paddled off cheeping loudly. He had discovered that a vile poacher had been preceding him up stream—to wit, a cormorant, which plays sad havoc in a trout river. Then we talked of the country and its prospects. My companion was once a minister of the province, and could tell me of the grand public

works planned and done under the provincial system, the abolition of which, just at the time when the people were reaping the fruits of their labours, he deplored. He, like some other gentlemen of position I met in New Zealand, regarded the change as an act of suicide. From him I began to learn, too, that there is being created in Canterbury and Otago, if not in other districts, a sterling yeoman class—the class which is almost extinct in the old country, but which cannot fail to prove the backbone of this and any other colony. He told me of many instances of small settlers going to head-quarters and purchasing for two pounds an acre the very heart of a squatter's run, all unknown to the squatter until the sale was effected; and how those settlers ran the plough through their newly acquired possessions, cast in the seed, and in the second year gathered in wheat at the rate of forty, fifty, or sixty bushels per acre, while in one case ninety bushels had been grown; also how the farmers were apt to abuse the good nature of the soil, and could not be induced to lay their land down to grass after a decent spell of grain culture, or convert it into turnips to be fed down by sheep.

On the hillside there was a modest tavern, where we spent a pleasant evening and slept the sleep of the just in homely beds, while the winds roared and beat in strengthening tempest.

CHAPTER X.

SHAG VALLEY AND DUNEDIN.

Agricultural prosperity—Pictures in the fire—An incident of colonial life—Stud farm for trout—An enthusiast—Fish-breeding—Sea-trout—An historical trout—An Irish Governor's plan—Scotch leaven in Otago—Dunedin and suburbs—The Water of Leith—Universsity buildings—Otago Museum—Port Chalmers.

NEXT day, once again on the wing, I took train for the south, passing on the way pastures and waving grain of the richest character, with now and then a diversity of fine coast scenery. It is a long day's railway journey from Christchurch to Dunedin, but the traveller who accomplishes it can better understand than he could before why New Zealand colonists have such deep-rooted faith in their future; can see for himself that the South Island differs altogether from the North; can behold evidences of agricultural prosperity everywhere. Upon the smallest farms neatness was scrupulously studied. The outbuildings were solid; the homesteads trim and wholesome. At the stations the people standing on the platforms were well dressed, and from first to last I can unhesitatingly say there was not to be seen a person whose appearance was poverty-stricken.

The saying that man is a creature of circumstances is as true as it is common. And it is true of little things as of great. Not three years had elapsed since, landing in Brisbane, the semi-tropical appearance of nature, semi-tropical habits (not half so semi-tropical, however, as they ought to be), and semi-tropical surroundings of both town and country, had a marked effect upon the new arrival from England. Now the English aspect of men and things in New Zealand seemed equally strange. I missed the light clothing and wooden verandah-built houses, and wondered how the people could bear broadcloth coats and head-dresses without puggarees, though I myself ever since leaving Sydney had been wearing a thick tweed suit and light cloth overcoat, and had relished them hugely. It might have been only fancy, but it seemed to me that there was a very perceptible difference between the temperature of the station from which I started in the morning and that at which I alighted in the afternoon. At Palmerston, where I stopped for the night, it was positively cold, and the first thing to be done at the hotel was to heap on more fuel, draw up close to the fender, welcome once more the strange pictures which the human fire spaniel can always figure out between the bars, and reflect that my Queensland friends were probably at that moment perspiring and clad as little as possible. My letters, when I subsequently got them, showed me that this was actually the case, and that while I was being driven by a bleak wind to the fireside, they were experiencing the intense heat of a premature summer.

A hanger-on at the hotel was very eager to show me something in an outbuilding, and was rather surprised that I declined to accompany him. The some-

thing was a box containing some human remains which had been brought in that day. It represented an incident of colonial life. Several weeks before, a man was missed. A search was prosecuted, and as each day's labour was ineffectual, foul play was suspected. At length a skeleton, with sufficient clothing to serve for identification at the official investigation, was found sticking in a now dried-up swamp. The unfortunate man had somehow wandered into it, perished miserably, and here, in this dismal box, were the fragmentary remains. This is no uncommon incident, of course, but I record it because, as will be duly told, another of the same description came under my observation.

My halt at Palmerston was caused by a visit I wished to make to a celebrated stud farm for trout in the Shag Valley. I had no intention of trying for myself this Otago river, having been assured that though trout of from eight to sixteen pounds were often taken, they could only be taken after dark, and by trolling tackle worked after a boat. The river differed from both Avon and Cust. Its bed was gravelly, and its banks shelving and open, but it was full of the small local whitebait which furnish the trout with a gorge without any trouble, and which, no doubt, made them grow to so large a size.

The proprietor of the Shag Valley mill deserves great credit for what he has done in the cause of trout. I never met a man whose heart was more in the work. His enthusiasm and love for his farm, garden, mill, and fish was so great that he made me wish myself a farmer and miller, and half wish myself a trout. I am not sure that when he showed me the majority of his twelve ruddy-faced children, turning over and loading the sweet-smelling hay in the newly mown

fields, I did not wish myself their parent. That I envied him his orchard and garden I do not deny. Amongst the Hawthornden pears, Ribstone pippins, gooseberries, currants, and plums, the trout for the time went clean out of mind, and I could think of nothing but his theories upon grafting, stocking, cider-making, and fruit-raising upon scientific principles—theories evolved, I suspect, out of certain American literature which I saw upon his parlour-table. He had a raspberry orchard of enormous extent, filberts and walnuts carefully nurtured, and all answering well. Fortunately, perhaps, for my health's sake, the early fruit was gone, and the later, though bending down the branches, was as yet unripe. But it was something to be once more in a really first-rate kitchen garden. New Zealand ought to be a great cider-exporting country, and hinting as much to Mr. Young, he informed me that he had a cider press on its way from "the States."

A naturalist heart and soul, this gentleman has for eleven years kept a minute diary of his efforts at fish-breeding, and when he was in doubt upon any point as to fruit, bird, or fish, his good wife proved she was as keen an enthusiast as himself. I believe they knew many of the fish individually, and their peculiarities of temper. "Several males have been fighting and injuring themselves a good deal," was a specimen of the entries in his journal. I can, however, only afford myself space for a bare summary.

The first hatching of trout was at Dunedin, but the experiment at the Shag river was with the first exported fish. A spring welling out of the side of a slope obviated the necessity of an artificial water supply, and the fall of the ground towards a pond and the river made it easy work to place the boxes. By these means

the trout have escaped gill fever. The first troutlings were set at liberty on the 31st of March, 1868, the ova having been obtained from Tasmania. Sea-trout were turned in in 1870; two years later three were caught, and last year a fish of five pounds was taken. But as the migratory season came on the sea-trout became restless, and most of them committed suicide by leaping out of the ponds. A second experiment with brown trout was a total failure; but when, by a net placed across the narrow mill-stream, the spawning fish could be taken and stripped of their ova, success was certain, and as large a proportion as ninety-seven per cent. of fish has been produced, though probably not half that average lived in the river.

On the 15th of July, 1874, large trout having been observed busy at their rids in the mill-race, a female fish of ten pounds (and six years old from its ova state), and others of nine and sixteen and a half pounds respectively, were netted. The last enumerated is preserved in the Dunedin Museum, and it is worthy of note, as showing the rapid growth of the fish, that twenty heavy trout were taken on the same day. No fewer than 2500 ova were taken at the first stripping from this sixteen-pounder; on the 19th July 4000 eggs were taken, on the 23rd 3500, on the 29th 3300, on August 3rd 3250. This fruitful parent's mission in life being now nobly accomplished, she was killed to be immortalized in a glass case; but the stripping process, by the time she reached Dunedin, had reduced her to twelve pounds, though she was twenty-eight and a half inches long and twenty and a quarter inches in girth. It is calculated that from this one fish fifteen thousand trout came to life. She had peculiar red spots on the fins, and these have been regularly transmitted to her

descendants. Half a dozen tiny baby trout were taken up for me in a tube (sent out to Mr. Young by Frank Buckland) from the boxes, and one of the number was at once pointed out as the lineal descendant of the historical sixteen-pounder. Some breeders hold definite opinions as to which fish should be first stripped, but Mr. Young has found both ways answer, though he generally begins with the female. A few salmon were put into the Shag river in 1877, but nothing has been seen of them since, though it is a likely river for the king of fish. During a walk along the high banks of a tributary, I counted fifteen large trout, the smallest of which must have turned the scale at five pounds; and we started a number of hares, and put up several wild ducks, to the great disturbance of their deserted broods—pretty, down-covered little creatures, whose antics it was most amusing to watch.

The first Governor of New Zealand, being a loyal-hearted Irishman, settled in his own mind, and actually proclaimed, that the three islands of the colony should thenceforth be known as New Ulster, New Munster, and New Leinster. But, so far from this plan being realized, the fact that it was entertained is almost forgotten. The early colonists proposed many things which circumstances subsequently disposed in a contrary manner. Canterbury, as we have seen, was to be, but is not, a purely Church of England settlement; and not all the Governors in the world could impart an Irish flavour to a country colonized as was New Zealand.

After looking for the last time around upon the sixteen small mountain cones which can be seen from Palmerston, and stretching out at ease in the first-class smoking carriage, I became aware that the train was very full, and that most of the people spoke with a

tremendously Scotch accent. This was not surprising, seeing that I was now in the district which was to be as exclusively Scotch as Canterbury was to be strictly episcopal. Otago was founded by Scotchmen, for the settlement of persons belonging to the Free Kirk, and the first batch of immigrants sailed from Greenock in the *John Wycliffe*, in 1847, under the leadership of a descendant of Donald Cargill. For a while the Scotch leaven was so strong that an early author upon the progress of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, described Dunedin as a fenced enclosure, within which unhappy and spiteful creatures, like strange cats, were endeavouring to tear out each other's eyes. The clannish character of the Scot came out strong in this new land, but the primary streams of British blood were bound sooner or later to intermingle, though even now the new-comer, especially the Australian who has been more familiar with the accents of his Irish fellow-colonists, will in Otago be struck with the overwhelming proportion of Scotchmen. I should not be far from the mark if I ventured the speculation that ten out of twelve amongst the passengers in the crowded train in which I travelled to Dunedin were North Britons; and, moreover, men who knew something of the Glasgow side of the "land o' cakes."

Dunedin is even now the finest city in New Zealand, though perhaps years will elapse before the loyal inhabitants of the other districts will be convinced of the fact. It is the largest and wealthiest; its progress from infancy to splendid manhood has been compassed within thirty years; and its infancy was so prolonged and feeble that it may be said that Dunedin was wrapped in very tight swaddling-clothes until 1861, when the rush for Gabriel's Gully brought over crowds

of Australian diggers, and with them new ideas, and a forward impetus which has never been checked. Princess Street, the main thoroughfare, is rather undulating than hilly, but long enough to tire an indifferent walker; and most of the Dunedin streets have been laid out with proper ideas of width. The buildings are of stone, and the architecture of the public establishments is tasteful and harmonious. There is a something about an enterprising community that tells the story of go-aheadness to a practised stranger without written or spoken word, and this something characterizes Dunedin in a marked degree.

The suburbs are precisely what the suburbs of a large growing city should be. One end, at the head of Otago harbour, overlooks the arm of the sea; it seems as if you were overlooking a beautiful lake, hemmed in by green hills, and designed for pleasure-parties without end. At high water the scene from any of the hills at the back of Princess Street is, though not extensive, exceedingly fine. At the other end of the city the character of the landscape changes. It is just the combination of hill, wood, and water dear to the heart of the Scotchman who has not forgotten the

> "Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood."

The hills do not encroach upon the town too closely, but are set back to the distance which lends enchantment, and they are more wooded than the hills about Auckland or Wellington. From one of them comes the Water of Leith, a boulder-bedded trout stream, which tumbles down over gradations of rock, and which naturally becomes fouler and fouler as it nears the

lower part of the town. Nevertheless, within a mile of the centre of Dunedin, I saw trout rising, and stood on a bridge near the university buildings while a man caught a brace, though the river was badly in want of a scouring flood. The gardens in this locality were in their prime. Every third woman or child passing townwards seemed to be carrying a bouquet of roses; in several cottage allotments I noticed, in addition to the common kinds, some of the rare yellow varieties. The climate of Dunedin must be very favourable for flowers of every description. On Fern Hill I had the privilege of sitting on a garden seat at the edge of a velvet-turfed bowling green, within sight of the finest fuchsia trees and shrubberies I ever saw; and the starlings were so tame that they would hunt for worms within half a dozen yards of your feet, whilst every morning the joyous song of the blackbirds greeted your waking. For the first time in the colonies, I saw children making necklaces and crowning each other with coronets of flowers.

The university buildings, in course of erection, are of blue stone, with a liberal addition of white, and in the course of a year or so the blue will become black, and so, without the tardy operation of wind and weather, the square-towered edifice will look venerably classic. On the hills opposite, stone villas occupy crow's-nest sites, and in point of size and architecture there are no private residences in New Zealand more deserving the name of villa. They are worthy of the suburbs of Edinburgh or Twickenham.

The Otago Museum, under the management and control of the university, is new and to some extent unfurnished, but its bird collection is the most artistically set up I have ever seen. It has the quality which the

collection of the British Museum and the collections of the continental cities so invariably lack—naturalness in the disposition of the birds. The man who stuffed and arranged the birds in the Otago Museum was nothing less than an artist. Should the other sections be completed as this gallery has been begun, the museum will be a model for all the colonies. Here, as at Christchurch, there is a perfect skeleton of the extinct moa, from the Shag Valley, where the bones have been found in large quantities.

Port Chalmers is a poor-looking township, but it is a lovely harbour, and the largest ships can lie close to the railway trucks. The sail from Dunedin, or at least from Port Chalmers, out of Otago harbour, is a treat not to be omitted by any one who can appreciate hills coned, hills rounded, hills wooded or verdant with crisp herbage, hills serrated with saddle and chine, hills softly or ruggedly outlined. As the estuary widens out before narrowing sharply at the heads, it is a long panorama of this description, with white houses, wooded knolls, brown cliffs, and stretches of white sand.

To anticipate somewhat: I left Dunedin by sea, having rejoined the *Rotorua* on her second return trip, and the passage from Port Chalmers to Tairoa Heads was a fitting close to a delightful holiday. Wild clouds, slate-coloured or dirty white with intervals of deep blue, and a coppery glow upon the dark green woods as the sun set, threatened a dirty night at sea, but gave a period of weird beauty as farewell to land. Out beyond the heads big mountains were piled high, but they were only mountains of clouds fantastically arranged and lurid of countenance.

CHAPTER XI.

NEW ZEALAND FISHES.

Dunedin fish-shops—Illegal possession—Comprehensive work on New Zealand fishes—Commission of inquiry—Abundance and variety—Dr. Hector's classification—Resident and visiting fish—Native salmon—Frost-fish—Snapper—Hapuku—Barracuda—Trevalli—King-fish—Butter-fish—Haddock—Red cod—New Zealand sole—Smooth-hound shark—Stinging ray—Fresh-water fishes.

In a previous chapter I have made reference to the abundance of fish to be found on the New Zealand coast, and as the scientific gentlemen connected with the New Zealand Government have taken more pains to produce a catalogue with diagnosis of the species than has hitherto been attempted in this end of the world, it will be interesting at this place to insert a brief chapter upon the subject.

The fish-shops of Dunedin I found remarkably well supplied, and every morning my first walk would be to see what the sea had sent up from Port Chalmers to the marble slabs during the night. There were generally fine salmon trout in the town *sub rosa*, and it was no secret that the fishermen in the tidal waters were in the habit of surreptitiously catching fine specimens of that strictly preserved fish. Some months after my

visit I read in the newspapers an account of how some persons got into serious trouble for having these fish illegally in their possession, and I have no doubt the New Zealand sportsmen would be delighted to find that the Government and people who had taken such pains to acclimatize these valuable fish were determined to see that they should have fair play.

The Colonial Museum and Geological Survey Department of the colony have published a most comprehensive little work on the fishes of New Zealand, the matter being contributed by Captain F. W. Hutton, F.G.S., and Dr. Hector, the able director of the Colonial Museum Department. In the following paragraphs I shall make free with the information they have published, and hereby make public acknowledgement of the fact.

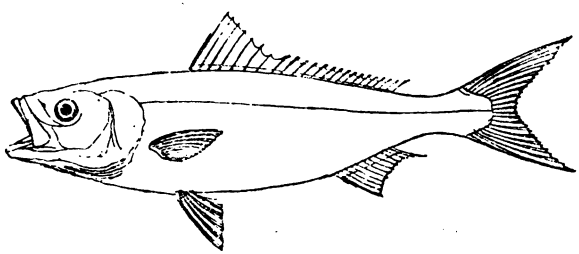
In 1868 commissioners were appointed by the Colonial Government to inquire into the extent and value of the fisheries on the New Zealand coasts as a natural source of wealth. Parliamentary papers published two years afterwards gave the results of their inquiries. It was found that only a few persons in proportion to the population engaged in fishing as a regular employment, and that the supply of fish, even for the local markets in the chief towns on the coast, was very insufficient and irregular. It was also suggested that a valuable trade might be opened in the preparation of fish, either for export or sale in the interior. The publication of these papers and the remarks made upon them in the legislature drew attention at once to this source of industry, and before long factories were established for pickling, drying, and otherwise preserving fish for sale. The sum total of the evidence taken by the commissioners was to show that there are

few countries in the world so magnificently supplied with fish as the New Zealand islands.

The business, however, has hitherto been confined to the waters of harbours or to the vicinity of rocky promontories. There is reason to believe, from specimens occasionally cast on shore during heavy storms, that there are numbers of deep-sea fish in this part of the South Pacific as to which nothing is at present known. There is a wonderful variety as well as abundance of fish in the New Zealand waters, the cold current on the south-east coast of Otago having its own fishes, while on the north-east coast, as far south as the Bay of Plenty, there are to be found such tropical visitors as the flying-fish, the true nautilus, and also the argonaut, or paper nautilus. Dr. Hector says that the New Zealand fishes resemble those which are found on the coast between Madeira and the Bay of Biscay more than those which are caught about the north of Scotland. Amongst the sea-fishes fit for food there are the following constant residents on all parts of the coast—the hapuku, tarakihi, trevalli, moki, aua, rock cod, wrasse, and patiki; and while the snapper, mullet, and gurnet are only met with in the north, the trumpeter, butter-fish, and red cod are confined to the south. But with the exception of the patiki, or flounder, and the red cod, none of these are representatives of fishes that are common even in the south of Britain, while from the more northern seas similar fishes are altogether absent. In addition to these, which we might term perennial, there are a number of periodical fishes, mostly visitors from warmer latitudes; and these include the frost-fish, barracuda, horse-mackerel, king-fish, dory, warehou, mackerel, and garfish. The same learned authority has discovered

that there are sixty-seven species peculiar to New Zealand, seventy-five common to the coasts of Australia or Tasmania, and ten species found in New Zealand and other places, but not in the Australian seas.

In Wellington harbour, as well as in the bays north, I found the kahawai, or native salmon, a favourite object of sport, and the following is Dr. Hector's description of it:—"This fish (*Arripis salar*) is frequently termed the native salmon, from its elegant form and lively habits, in which it resembles the true salmon. During the summer months these fish, which reach the weight of seven pounds, but are more usual from two

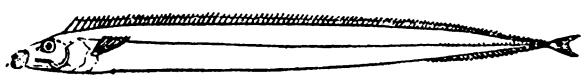


Native Salmon.

to three pounds, visit the coast in great shoals, especially frequenting the mouths of streams. They afford good sport to the angler, as they rise to an artificial fly, and are readily taken at sea with spoon-bait. When of large size the flesh is rather dry and tasteless, but the young fish, when under one pound in weight and quite fresh, are very delicate and well flavoured, especially when boiled in water acidulated with vinegar. In the early stage of their growth they are spotted on the sides like trout, but with fainter colours. It is one of the early fishes in spring, at which season it follows

voraciously the young fry of the aua, or sea-mullet. In the autumn Mr. Ingles reports that they follow the 'grit,' or whale-feed, which is chiefly a small shrimp that swarms in the sea at that season to such an extent that it extends as far as the eye can reach, and may be shovelled up into boats so as to form a most valuable manure. The kahawai appears to be a migratory fish, avoiding only that portion of the coast that is washed by the cold south-east current."

A fish which I failed to see, it being summer time, but of which I heard much, was the frost-fish, acknowledged by universal consent to be one of the most delicious eating fish known in the colony. No one seems to have succeeded in catching this fish with hook and line,

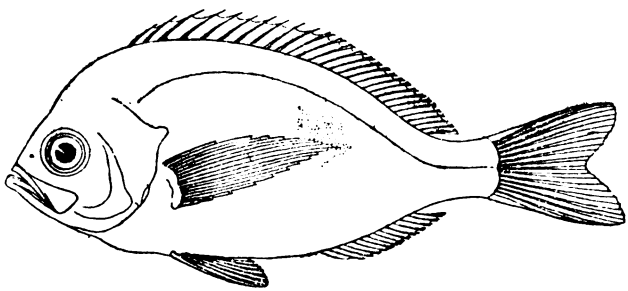


Frost-fish.

and it contrives under all circumstances to evade the nets of the fishermen. It very seldom comes to market, and when it does it is held in such high repute that it fetches half-a-crown a pound. At Wellington the frost-fish are brought in by the drivers of the coaches along the beach between Otaki and Manawatu on frosty mornings. They are cast up on the shore only during the prevalence of frost, and on sandy beaches that are exposed to the long roll of ocean swell. Although I was unable to make personal acquaintance with this singular fish, I saw a well-preserved specimen in the Otago Museum, and the reader from the above sketch may form an idea of what it is like.

There seemed to be two kinds of snapper on the

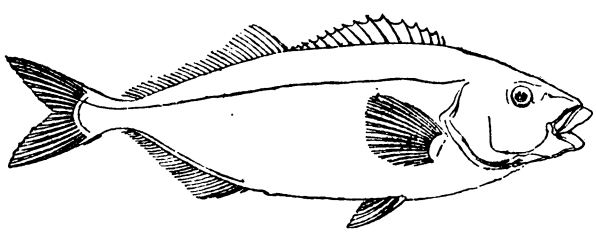
New Zealand coasts, but neither is like the beautiful specimen of the same fish caught in Australian waters. At all the ports at which our steamers called I found men and boys successfully fishing with hand-lines from the wharves and jetties for snapper. In the Queensland waters the snapper is only to be found in deep water,



Red Snapper.

and generally around rocks rising out of the deep sea. In New Zealand it frequents shallow water, is often caught with the net in the harbours, and natives are very fond of angling for them in the surf when the wind is off shore.

The most common fish I saw for sale by the New

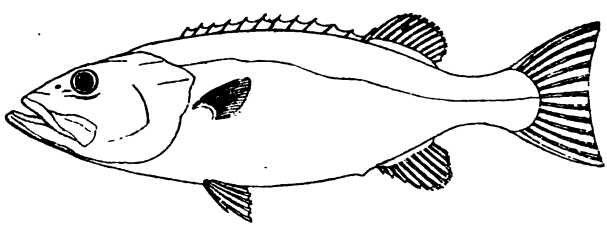


Moki.

Zealand fishmongers was one which has been allowed to retain its native name—moki. It is chiefly caught

with the net, and when in season is a very rich and well-flavoured fish. I saw no specimens bigger than four pounds; but they attain a much larger size, and are in great request amongst the Maoris, who roast and bake them in their own peculiar ovens in the earth. Large numbers of these fish are cured, smoked, and sent into the interior.

Another native fish, the hapuku, is commonly called the New Zealand cod, although properly it is a sea-perch. This is another migratory summer fish, gives excellent sport, and I was told by a gentleman passionately fond of sea-fishing that he once hauled in a



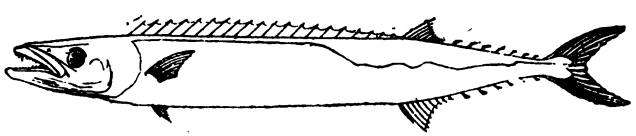
Hapuku.

specimen 122 pounds in weight. Mr. Munro, in evidence to the Joint Committee on Colonial Industries, made the following statement with respect to the hapuku:—

"I had some little experience with the hapuku. For the first two years and a half after I came to the country I was lying idle, sojourning at Wangarei Heads, waiting to get land for myself and passengers, and opening the way for others to follow; and during those two years and a half I made nineteen voyages, in a small boat I had brought with me from Nova Scotia, to the Hen and Chickens, fishing hapuku for family

use, as well as to kill time, or for pleasure if you like, and seldom, unless interrupted by storms, missed making fine hauls of that superior fish; on one trip particularly I took fifty-two hapukus home, and caught with my own hands one that weighed ninety pounds, and I met with persons who had seen larger still. If a person like myself, going out when fancy led me, without any experience of the tides, appetite or habits of the fish, could catch such large lots in so short a time, what would an experienced fisherman catch, who would be for months stationed at the place?"

The barracuda is too well known throughout the colonies, and too fully described in all books on natural history, to require amplified description here. It is caught by the Maoris with a short piece of redwood, having a sharp nail driven through it for a hook, and this is spun rapidly alongside a canoe, a short line and rod being used, and no shrift being given to the fish

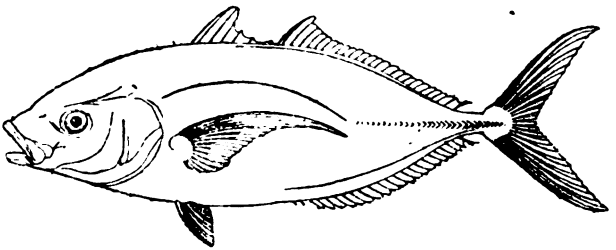


Barracuda.

when once he is nailed. To my taste the barracuda, although its flesh is white and flaky, is very dry eating when fresh, but it makes most acceptable food when pickled and smoked.

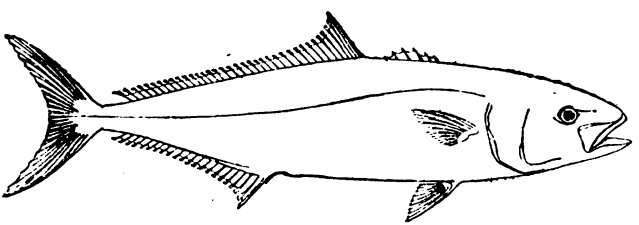
At Tauranga I caught two or three specimens of the trevalli, and seldom passed along the street fronting the harbour without meeting three or four Maoris with a string of half a dozen two-pound fish dangling from a strand of the universal flax. It is a handsome

broad-sided fish, with brilliant yellow tints, and is very fine eating.



Trevalli.

The biggest fish I saw in the market was the king-fish, called in Australia yellow-tail. It was rather early in the season for the shoals that annually visit Cook Strait in the months of January and February, but the specimen I saw was at least three feet six inches long, and must have weighed between thirty and forty pounds. They are a powerful fish, and are

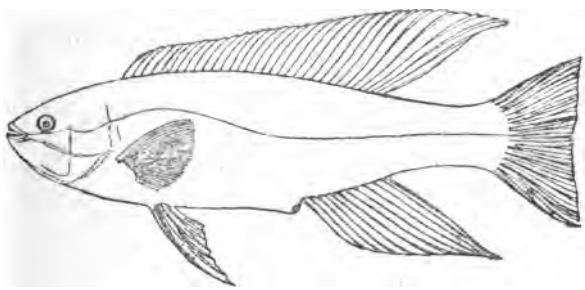


King-fish or Haku.

often taken when snapper fishing; they leap out of the water in fine weather, are very voracious, and are sometimes cast up in numbers upon exposed beaches, where the natives search for them, and bear off their prize as treasured gifts to friends.

We have no mackerel in Queensland, but there is a coarse description on the coasts of the other colonies. There is a New Zealand mackerel, however, which somewhat resembles the pretty little fish for which we whiffle in the English Channel, though it lacks its exquisite flavour; and the same remark will apply to the colonial herring. It requires a residence in the colonies to appreciate to its fullest extent a breakfast of too much despised fresh herrings or newly caught mackerel.

There is a dark-coloured, ugly-looking fish called the butter-fish, known by the fishermen as the kelp-fish.

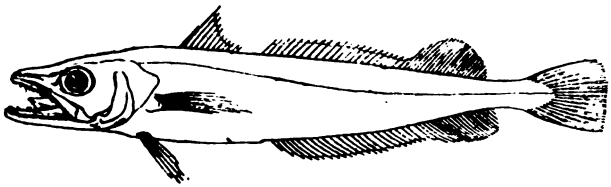


Butter-fish.

Notwithstanding its unpleasant appearance, it is excellent eating if the cook carefully removes the skin as soon as it is taken from the fire. It runs from four to five pounds, and is caught amongst the kelp plants, in the midst of which it seems to make its home.

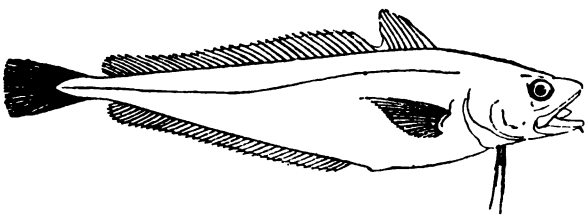
In a colony abounding in Scotchmen we might naturally expect a fish called the haddock; and such there is. It is not very plentiful; and Captain Hutton, who secured a few specimens cast upon the shore of Cook Strait after a heavy south-east gale, describes it as a new specimen.

There is another fish somewhat resembling it, cured and sold in Dunedin as the Findon haddock. This is



Haddock.

in reality a red cod, and is beautifully coloured. It gives good sport to the line fishermen on a sandy bottom and in from ten to fifteen fathoms of water.

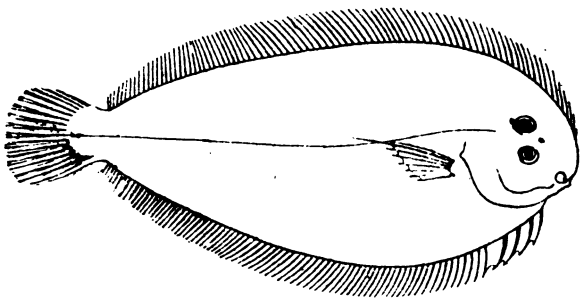


Red Cod.

Another fish which the true Briton learns to value when, in the colonies, he is unable to obtain it, is the sole of our northern seas. In each colony there is a flat fish which is called a sole; but it bears about the same resemblance to the fish as we know it as does the horse-mackerel to the mackerel proper. The New Zealand sole has a curiously hooked fleshy snout, which completely hides the upper part of the mouth.

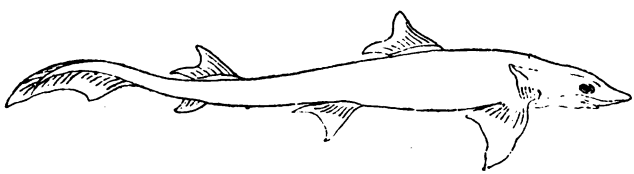
In one respect the Maoris are like Chinamen—they have a sweet tooth for sharks, especially the smooth-hound dog-fish and tope. The smooth-hound lives on

shellfish and crabs, feeds like the skate, and is most appreciated for table purposes. At the Maori seaside



New Zealand Sole.

settlements thousands of sharks during the proper seasons may be seen hanging on poles to dry, and may be smelt at a great distance.



Smooth-hound Shark.

The stinging ray abounds on the New Zealand as on the Australian coast, and some splendid sport is occasionally had in spearing him. Strange to say, the stinging ray is seldom used as an article of food. In fishing for whiting in Queensland with fine gut tackle, I have often had the misfortune of getting one of these strong and—if you get within the reach of his tail—dangerous creatures on my hook, but was always too glad to allow him to break away without any loss of

time and at any cost of tackle. There is a portion of the root of the fin which a certain learned judge, who is an acknowledged connoisseur, regards as a priceless delicacy; and he always maintains that this morsel of the stingamarree, as it is vulgarly called, properly crimped, is a dish fit for a king.

The fresh-water fishes of New Zealand, until the acclimatizers introduced brown trout, salmon trout, Prussian carp, perch, and tench, were neither very numerous nor useful. There are some small scaleless fish which, probably on account of their spots, are called trout, and there is a tiny New Zealand minnow, the young fry of which forms the whitebait to which I have referred in a previous chapter as affording too plentiful food for the trout. In the neighbourhood of the hot lakes I used to see the Maoris with a kit full of these small fry, which they either thrust into a boiling spring, or cooked as they do their potatoes, by putting them into a hole in the earth and covering them with hot stones and fern.

The Australian grayling which I had caught in Tasmania has a kinsman in New Zealand. For some time it was not properly recognized or described. It has not the cucumber smell of the Tasmanian fresh-water mullet, but it takes the fly in a workmanlike manner. It has been found in most of the clear running streams of New Zealand, and, as usual, seldom reaches a pound in weight. In his notes on the edible fishes Dr. Hector thus writes of the "Upokoro":—

"The above is the native name of the grayling (*Prototroctes oxyrhynchus*), a fish that has been long familiar to the settlers in certain districts, but which does not appear to have been obtained by any of the earliest collectors of the fishes of New Zealand, and

remained undescribed till last year, when specimens were forwarded by the Westland Naturalists' Society to Mr. F. Buckland, who eventually requested Dr. Günther's opinion about them. He recognized it to be a closely allied species to a fish from the fresh waters of Australia, discovered in 1862, and which he had placed in the same family with a salmonoid fish (*Haplochiton*) that inhabits the cold fresh waters of Terra del Fuego, the Falkland Islands, and the southern parts of the American continent. Respecting the relationship of these genera to each other, Dr. Günther states that the Australian and New Zealand fish stand in the same relation to those of South America as the genus *Coregonus* (of which the white-fish of the American lakes and the vendace of Scotland are examples) does to the true salmon, and that, 'however the Southern *Haplochitonidæ* may differ from the *Salmonidæ* in the structure of the jaws and intestinal tract, it is a most remarkable fact that the fresh waters of the southern hemisphere are inhabited by two genera with adipose fins so extremely similar in outward appearance to the northern Salmonoids." *

* "Proceedings Zoological Society," London, 10th March, 1870.

CHAPTER XII.

TROUTING AMONGST THE HILLS.

Californian salmon—Acclimatizers—A lovely valley—All against collar—In the hill country—An angler's rest—Day of small trout—The unknown angler—Eight happy days—Lee stream trout—A cool reception—Clearing up—Fly-tying—"L.'s persuader"—Excitement in "Sleepy Hollow"—No murder after all—Good sport—The Deep stream—Sport in the Cust—The Koorawa—Glorious sport—Holiday ends.

THERE are, let me first premise, up to the present time but few rivers in New Zealand open for trout fishing. As for salmon, they are amongst the possibilities of the future, but numbers of fry from California have recently been turned loose. In the course of a year or two, however, New Zealand should be a magnificent island for the trout fisher. Each provincial district has its acclimatization society, which, encouraged by the Government, pays great attention to the stocking of the rivers; and, in addition to this, gentlemen through whose property likely streams run have for the last two or three years made praiseworthy individual efforts to secure young fish and turn them into their waters. So far as I could gather from inquiries instituted here and there, the Lee stream, up amongst the Otago hills, appeared to offer what I required, and to the Lee stream

I determined accordingly to go. Dunedin was wrapped in slumber as I walked through its streets on a certain November morning to catch the 6.30 train, and a most promising morning it was for the angler—cloudy, but not with rain-clouds; sunny, but not with too much brightness; and there was a soft wind answering to the westerly breezes at home.

The train by which I travelled to Outram station passed through one of the prettiest agricultural valleys I had seen. It is from four to five miles broad, and perfectly farmed. The low mountain range springs up clear from the green level, and both valley and mountains, except where in the dark clefts of the latter there were gullies full of underwood, were treeless. Where English grass had been sown the plain was of a bright green, but where the native grasses had not been interfered with there were russet hues which added considerably to the charms of the picture. At the foot of the wooded clefts on the hill-sides were substantial homesteads sheltered by trees. Then would come an interval of marsh land as yet unreclaimed and in possession of numbers of swamp hens. Here also the native flax flourished, as it does everywhere in the colony. But the whole of this lovely valley is being gradually reclaimed, and as we neared Outram even smart English farmers would have been delighted with the rich green crops and level grass lands dotted with sleek sheep and cattle. On the side on which the bleakest winds blew the homesteads were invariably protected by curtains of blue gum. Here and there ploughmen's teams were at work in the fallows, and in the neighbourhood of the last station these agricultural developments were carried to their highest extent.

A buggy, so called, but which was rather an express

waggon than a buggy, drawn by two horses that were more serviceable than symmetrical, either individually or as a pair, was waiting outside for any chance comer bound for the little inn eight miles further over the hills, and which was to be my head-quarters. We started at once, all against collar for three-quarters of the distance, with magnificent views of the valleys through which I had passed by rail, and of mountains beyond. I discovered from the driver, a half-witted youth with tremendously long legs, and who was much given to using frightful language and a maximum of whip to his ill-assorted pair, that there was one angler, and one only, at the inn. He did not know his name—said he seemed a decent sort of fellow, but that he had been unable on account of the wind and rain to catch much fish. Still he had caught something; and now that the weather had become warmer, and the roads, which had been like a ploughed field, were drying up, the chances of sport would be excellent.

After an hour and a half of plodding up and up over country chiefly occupied as sheep-runs, we reached the highest point of the road, and then began a steep curving downward turn. I asked the driver where the inn might happen to be, and for reply he gave a maniacal whoop, lashed up the horses, and descended at break-neck speed. Fortunately this kind of entertainment did not last long; for in the hollow of a natural basin, encircled by grassy hills, a homely looking inn presented itself—a veritable angler's rest. We dashed in amongst the geese, turkeys, ducks, and fowls, scattering them right and left, and there we were. Legs and quarters of mutton were suspended in the bar, which was store as well as hotel; and the hostess, a neat Scotch widow, came forward to smile a welcome.

The place was completely out of the world. It was solitude indeed, for there was no house within many miles, and I afterwards found that in winter time, when the snow lies deep, no traveller appears upon the road for days and weeks together.

The river ran close by, spanned by a strong bridge, from the further side of which the road began again to wind over more hills. The stream here described a horseshoe bend, skirting the garden of the inn, and then making another turn through a deep gorge. It was a river an angler loves to see; from ten to thirty yards broad, with rocky bottom, not a weed to be seen, and abounding in ripples and shallows. The angler of whom I had been hearing had already gone down stream; and after a hasty breakfast I took the opposite direction, climbing a bold bluff in order to circumvent the gorge, and within two hundred yards of the inn stables getting my first fish, a gamesome brown trout. During an hour I had thrown in a score under a quarter of a pound, and then ceased counting. But it was no uncommon thing in the shallower water to hook two at once of these troublesome little juveniles. The banks were so steep in some reaches that it was almost impossible to fish the stream without wading, but as a rule there was nothing to complain of. It was pure Dartmoor country, with not a tree to be seen as far as the eye could reach. I returned in the evening with two brace and a half of trout averaging three-quarters of a pound, well satisfied with the modest sport, and as deeply in love with the Lee stream as it was possible for man to be.

How I revelled in the cool mountain air, in the ice-cold crystal water, in the ability to exert one's self without being thrown into a bath of perspiration, can

well be understood by the reader. The fire in the inn parlour burned brightly; the easy-chair was as soft as the Lord Chancellor's woolsack; the lighted pipe and the slippered foot were welcome as dusk came on, and I waited for the unknown angler. I heard footsteps behind, heard a voice wishing me good evening, looked round, and recognized, of all persons in the world, an intimate acquaintance from Queensland. He had occupied an official position in that colony; his office had been abolished, and here he was enjoying a well-earned holiday. The surprise was all the greater because I had never suspected that he was an angling man; but I afterwards found that he was a grand-master in the craft. My stay at the Lee stream was not therefore altogether solitude; and it was certainly pleasant to have a sporting companion with whom one could converse upon angling matters. He had two brace of trout to show for his day's work. On the first day of his arrival, before the rain set in, he had caught nine good fish, and his report of the river was very encouraging.

I spent eight days upon the Lee stream, and would have spent thrice eight had my leave of absence permitted. I do not intend to inflict upon the reader an account of the occupations, successes, or reverses of each day; but, including three days when it was too windy to fish at all, except for half an hour in the evening, and then in sheltered reaches which happened to be the worst water we could have selected for fishing, we could show a record of sixty-four trout, fairly killed with the artificial fly; the largest a magnificent fellow of three and a half pounds, caught by my friend, and none smaller than half a pound; and I should be within the mark if I said that of unsizable fish we returned

between one and two hundred to the water. In mercy to the stock, we would sometimes agree to restrict ourselves to a brace each, there being no people in the neighbourhood to whom fish could be given, and trout on the table three times every day carrying one back to the period when the English apprentices stipulated in their indentures against an overplus of salmon.

The trout in the Lee stream, and doubtless in other New Zealand streams of the same character, are not inferior in any respect to their English brethren. They were game, had the discretion to appreciate a well-tied fly, and were excellent in flavour. One day, amidst a shower of cold rain, a number of gentlemen came up from Dunedin for a little fishing, and a thick mist enveloping all the hills gave them a cool reception. I was sorry for them, for during their three days' stay their sport was of the worst possible description. Some of the anglers, I found, were not averse to using worms, maggots, and grasshoppers. Some fish I saw taken which were unmistakably under size, by a couple of lads who came for one day, and seeing this I deemed it a good thing for the Lee stream that it was so far from the city and could only at odd times be subjected to any unfair and illegal treatment. However, at night we gathered around the coal fire and became practically a jolly angling club. After these gentlemen had gone back to their various avocations in Dunedin, the weather cleared up and our good sport returned to us.

The clearing up of the weather was announced to me one morning by a concert from the stable-yard. In the bright sunshine and clear sky, after the wintry winds, driving rain, and heavy Scotch mists of the preceding day, the turkeys and geese lifted up their voices, and between them they made a decent pother.

In that delicious state of mind which comes upon you between sleeping and waking, these old barn-door echoes were decidedly pleasant; so I turned cozily over under the blankets and analyzed the performance with just a dash of sentiment infused into the analysis, my friend in the adjoining chamber, being of a more practical turn of thought, meanwhile execrating the noisy fowl for breaking his slumbers. Here it occurred to me that these farmyard sounds might be no morning anthems after all, no *Te Deum* for deliverance from the elements—nothing, in short, which might not be explained by perfectly natural causes. A plague upon these sceptical doubts, for they drag one out of pleasant dreamland and taint the fount of true sentiment.

Rising therewith, and peeping out of the casement, I found that prose had it; if there were any poetry, it was that of common life, which—who knows?—may be the best after all. My friend was out of his room by this time, and I found him sitting in an easy-chair in front of the window tying flies. Few modern anglers understand this art; it always marks the true enthusiast. Perhaps life is too short in this age for amateurs to learn the process; perhaps the excellence and cheapness of the bought article recommend it in preference to the home-made production. Although I myself have never taken the invariable advice of the angling book, and learned how to make my own flies, I always enjoyed watching the fly-tyer and talking with him about his theories and methods, about his feathers and furs brought from every quarter of the globe, and hoarded secure from moth for many a year. My friend was as good a fly-maker as he was a fisherman, and he swore by one particular fly. Most anglers have violent likings of this kind, but it does not fall to every

one to be the author of his own fancy. With my friend this was the case. He called his hackle "L.'s persuader," and challenged it against all comers, maintaining that he had proved its killing qualities upon rivers and lakes at home, where local men had laughed him to scorn, and describing how he had found it, a month previously, as good in Tasmania as in the United Kingdom, fifteen or sixteen years ago. It looked like a good fly, with its hare's ear, body tagged with gold, and woodcock feather for hackle, but—all-important reservation—woodcock hackle from the extreme tip of the wing. Amongst his tiny pincers, scissors, varnish bottle, silks, wools, feathers, hooks, and gut spread out before him, he described the virtues of this lure most lovingly. That evening I came back with eight good trout, and my friend with five, yet outweighing mine very considerably.

There was great excitement in this "Sleepy Hollow" one day during my stay. A man, halting his team of ten bullocks at the bottom of the hill, announced that a murder had taken place still further up, and that two men were in custody on suspicion of the crime. The weak point in the case was the fact that the body of the dead man had not been found, and it was not surprising that, after an anxious search, the mounted police returned stating that there had been no murder after all. They had found the body of the missing man, however, in a sheltered gully, bearing no marks of violence, but with every indication of having perished by cold. This turned out to be the fact. The unfortunate fellow had been drinking too freely of some of the poisoned decoctions which are sold in out-of-the-way places in the colonies for grog, and wandered away in the mountains, and died where there was no

eye to pity and no hand to save—another incident in colonial life.

My friend, who must now be called into the witness-box, was more fortunate than myself, having at that time no duty claiming his attention. After leaving Queensland, he had travelled to Adelaide on his way to England, had in that city seen a paragraph in the newspapers describing the fishing capabilities of the Lee stream, and had at once packed up his belongings and taken ticket to New Zealand instead of England. He was now so enchanted with the sport at his disposal that he determined to remain and experiment upon other streams, and, while wishing him farewell and plenty of sport, I elicited from him a promise to write me from time to time how he fared. An extract or two from his letters will supplement all I have to say of trout-fishing in New Zealand. Several weeks afterwards he wrote from the Lee stream :—

"During all my fishing in the stream I have been very successful. True, I have not had any one day such as that you wot of—namely, seven fish weighing thirteen and a half pounds—yet I have caught larger individual fish. I have had but three blank days, but even then I had the pleasure of moving fish. On the Thursday following your departure I went to another stream up in the mountains, called the Deep stream; commenced fishing at 6.30 and ceased at eight, when I had three fish in my basket weighing from eight to twelve ounces, and had lost three big ones. On another occasion the water was in bad condition, caused by certain sluicing operations by gold-diggers about ten miles up stream, and I did not get a rise the whole day; but I am convinced the river abounds with large trout.

"I caught a three-and-a-half pounder with my old favourite, L.'s persuader. He afforded me excellent sport, being hooked in boiling water some thirty yards above the head of a large pool, for which, over stones and rocks, he at once rushed; I, neck or nothing, following pretty sharp after him, as I always follow my fish, where practicable, instead of letting out line—the shorter the line the more control over the fish. It was very exciting, and took me down one hundred yards before I saw him. I really thought I should lose him after all, for the pole was under a high bank, and I had to take him still further down by degrees before I could get a spot to land him. Since you left I have had a pleasant companion in Professor M., with whom I drove to the Upper Taieri, twenty-five miles further, and forty miles from here. We stopped at a shepherd's on Sunday night, and started next morning for the river. Just before arriving at the stopping-place, we had to cross the river Styx; but although, of course, I had my obolus ready, neither old Charon nor any other fellow demanded that or any coin; nor did I perceive Hades on the other side. About five minutes after commencing to fish, I heard a 'cooee' about a hundred yards above me, and saw that my companion had hold of something, which proved to be a trout, five pounds two ounces, which he had taken with the minnow spinning. We were of course elated, expecting splendid catches; but although we fished well, one with minnow, another with grasshopper, and myself with L.'s persuader, not another fish did we get. During my absence a trout of four pounds seven ounces was taken with the grasshopper in the Lee stream; another on the same day, also with grasshopper, three pounds five ounces. The gentleman

with the four-pounder had three others, all taken with the grasshopper, the four fish weighing exactly ten pounds. Not so bad that, eh?

"P.S.—I open this to inform you that on Monday last I landed the best-conditioned fish I have taken—weight, two pounds seven ounces. The head appeared to be almost the size of a florin, while the neck and shoulders were thick and raised almost like a little pig of the Chinese breed. You probably read an account of a thirteen-pound fish said to have been caught in the Deep stream. I have made particular inquiries, and find that it was not taken there, but in the estuary, and the false locality was given by the fisherman, who knew that he would be proceeded against, as it was contrary to law to take the fish in the bay."

Two months later I received another letter from my friend, who had got as far as Christchurch, and he says: "Since my stay here I have had two half-days at the Cust, a difficult river, as you told me, to fish, being so narrow and obstructed by flax bushes. Still I managed to get half a dozen, the only fly that killed being L.'s persuader, or rather one made in imitation of it with the best material I could get. I then went back to Otago, Mr. A. having written me about the Waipahi, eighty-four miles below Dunedin. I walked up and down this river for a good portion of two days, but not a shadow of a fish was seen. I had to stay about three hours at the Clinton station, and during that time discovered a small river much like the Cust, which I was afterwards informed was the Koorawa. I saw several small fish which they told me were trout. The water was so low and clear that in many places I could cross without getting wet above the soles of my boots, and in some places I could step

across it like a gutter. Nevertheless, there were likely looking places. Afterwards I decided to return to Clinton and try it.

"I commenced to fish at 1.30 p.m., and continued until five, when I had ten good trout—the largest three pounds ten ounces; the others much smaller, but still sizeable fish. I had hooked and lost four others, and three small ones I returned to the river. Having to return to Dunedin, I could only fish on the next day from eight to eleven, when I had five more, real beauties, and lost several too, besides one that was mean enough to bolt with my fly and a good piece of casting line. I told Mr. A. on my return of this wonderful luck, and he told me that he had fished the water and could never catch anything. The people at the public-house, too, told me that it was only occasionally an angler succeeded in catching a fish. I was also informed that the fish were being netted, tickled, and subjected to all sorts of vile and unsportsmanlike practices. I went back again to the Deep stream, and hooked and lost one fish. I have seen many anglers about, but, little as I deserve it, none have had such sport as this. One fish, and one only, I killed with the governor; all the others with L.'s persuader and a black gnat made to a pattern given me by one of the C.'s. This undoubtedly divided the honours with L.'s persuader."

A fortnight later came a third letter:—"I just write to say I have been again to Clinton, and had glorious sport. I remained a fortnight. The largest fish was weighed in Dunedin by Mr. D., and turned the scale at five pounds. He telegraphed to ask whether he should send me some chain tackle to land the rest with! This fish, I may mention, was taken with the black gnat made after C.'s pattern. One day I had

six fish—weight, fifteen pounds; another day eleven, about the same weight."

These records, I know, may be relied upon for their accuracy; and the reader will agree with me that my friend's sport was most enviable. He had fortunately plenty of time to spare, the period referred to in the above extracts extending from October to the end of February; and, as I have indicated, he was a consummate fly-fisherman, who, from the moment he reached the water-side until darkness warned him to desist, would work hard and pay attention to nothing but the business before him. He therefore deserved his success, though it is but fair to add that few of the New Zealand anglers have been able to give so good an account of sport.

* * * * * *

The reader will by this time have perceived that my holiday of two months was mainly taken up in travelling. I was always, as the saying goes, on the wing, and having fallen into the temptation of lingering to the latest moment on the Lee stream, other plans which I had formed were left unaccomplished. I had mapped out a visit to the Bluff and Invercargill; was to have pushed on to the glaciers and lakes of Otago, and seen something of the famous Western sounds, which are, by universal repute, unique. But I allowed the chance to slip by, and had to content myself with remembering the old proverb, which tells us that we cannot both have and eat our cake. Yet I did not altogether regret the partial fulfilment of my design. I had the pleasure of dawdling and fishing by the Lee stream; of wandering up to its narrow head-waters, where the bed changed from rock to golden gravel and amber sands; of lying dreamily amongst the sweet yellow wild

hyacinths on the soft turf under the shade of a flax bush, with sheafs of bayonet-like spear-grass to protect me, if protection had been necessary; and of generally mooning heedlessly to and fro, proud of the scientific pitch to which I had brought the habit of idleness. It was under these circumstances that I postponed glaciers, lakes, and sounds, and went back contented to my Queensland home with a new stock of vigour.

THE END.

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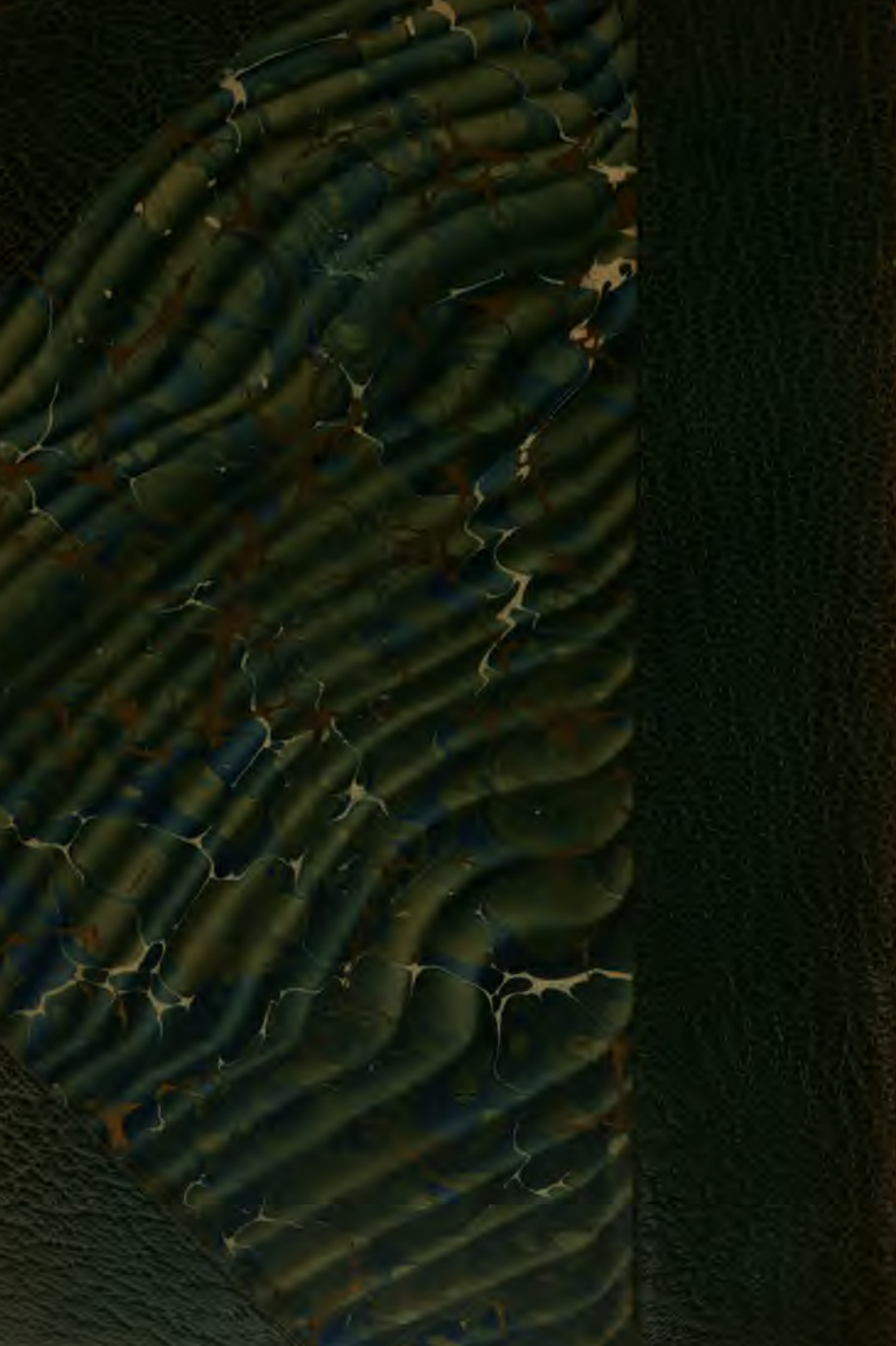
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